

Monday January 8 1996

Algeria D 0.50	Poland R 70
Australia £ 2.20	Portugal £ 200
Belgium FF 10	Romania R 2.50
Canada C\$ 1.00	Russia R 1.50
Denmark D 1.00	Saudi Arabia R 1.50
France FF 10	Slovenia S 1.20
Germany DM 3.50	Spain P 1.20
Greece D 350	Sweden S 1.50
India R 10	Switzerland S 1.50
Italy L 1.00	Taiwan NT 100
Japan Y 100	Thailand B 10
Korea W 100	USA \$ 2.75
Malaysia M 1.00	
Mexico M 1.00	
Netherlands G 1.00	
Norway N 1.00	
Oman O 1.00	
Pakistan R 70	
Poland Z 2.70	
Portugal £ 200	
Romania R 2.50	
Russia R 1.50	
Saudi Arabia R 1.50	
Slovenia S 1.20	
Spain P 1.20	
Sweden S 1.50	
Switzerland S 1.50	
Taiwan NT 100	
Thailand B 10	
USA \$ 2.75	

The Guardian

INTERNATIONAL

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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR
46,444

Extract from Angela Neustatter's new book

Baby boomers at 50

Guardian 2 with European weather



Media

Wapping 10 years on

G2 pages 7/9

Robert De Niro back on form

Turning on the heat

G2 pages 10/11



Major adds to Saudi turmoil

Seumas Milne and Michael White

JOHNSON Major yesterday intervened in the furor over plans to expel Mohammed al-Mas'ari, describing the Saudi dissident as an illegal immigrant amid growing signs of confusion as to whether commercial or strategic reasons lay behind the decision to deport him.

The Prime Minister said Mr Mas'ari had sought to create an "unsettled relationship" with Saudi Arabia — which was critical to the stability of the Gulf and British interests — and his administration could not "tolerantly look to one side".

There was fresh embarrassment for the Government yesterday when it emerged that the BBC's Arabic television service was blacked out at the Saudi-owned satellite relay station in Rome after news broke last week of the decision to deport Mr Mas'ari to Dominica in the Caribbean.

The service is channelled through Orbit Communications, part of the Mawrid business empire, owned by Saudi Prince Khalid bin Abdul-Rahman, a cousin of King Fahd. A spokesman for BBC Worldwide Television last night said broadcasting had been resumed, but the gap in transmission — were being "urgently investigated".

The Prime Minister's sharply different tone

stressed both that Mr Mas'ari is an illegal immigrant — a common necessity for many people fleeing political persecution — and the importance of Saudi Arabia to Gulf stability. Though he did not say so, that means the whole structure of western economies dependent on Gulf oil.

Mr Major's intervention came as Tory MPs expressed astonishment that the Government could have sustained such an embarrassing public relations defeat over a decision which could have won overwhelming support if presented properly.

They fear ministers face further humiliation in the courts as remarks by Michael Howard and his Home Office team, linking deportation with commercial calculations, will be used to uphold Mr Mas'ari's appeal.

One former minister said: "It is vital not to pierce the integrity of the system. Ministers should have stuck to the line about his being an undesirable illegal immigrant."

The result, some Tory MPs predicted, will make tackling "the massive problem" of asylum abuse by bogus claimants much harder at a time when the controversial Asylum and Immigration Bill faces Commons scrutiny.

Ministers are confident that voters — and workers in the arms industries — will uphold their judgment, a view reflected in Labour's cautious response where vital manufacturing capacity is at stake.

Mas'ari, a tax manufacturer Vickers refused to comment on suggestions by Mr Mas'ari that a remark about "stiffing" him in its leaked memorandum — published in the Guardian on Saturday — was a reference to a Saudi kidnap or murder plot.

The memo, by the firm's chief executive, Sir Colin Chandler, cited a view in intelligence and business circles that "direct Saudi intervention" against the dissident could be "difficult".

In the first official Saudi response Mr Mas'ari was stripped of his citizenship.



Life on the edge offers investors last smellicium in England and last unsavoury kitchen in Scotland

Roger Cove

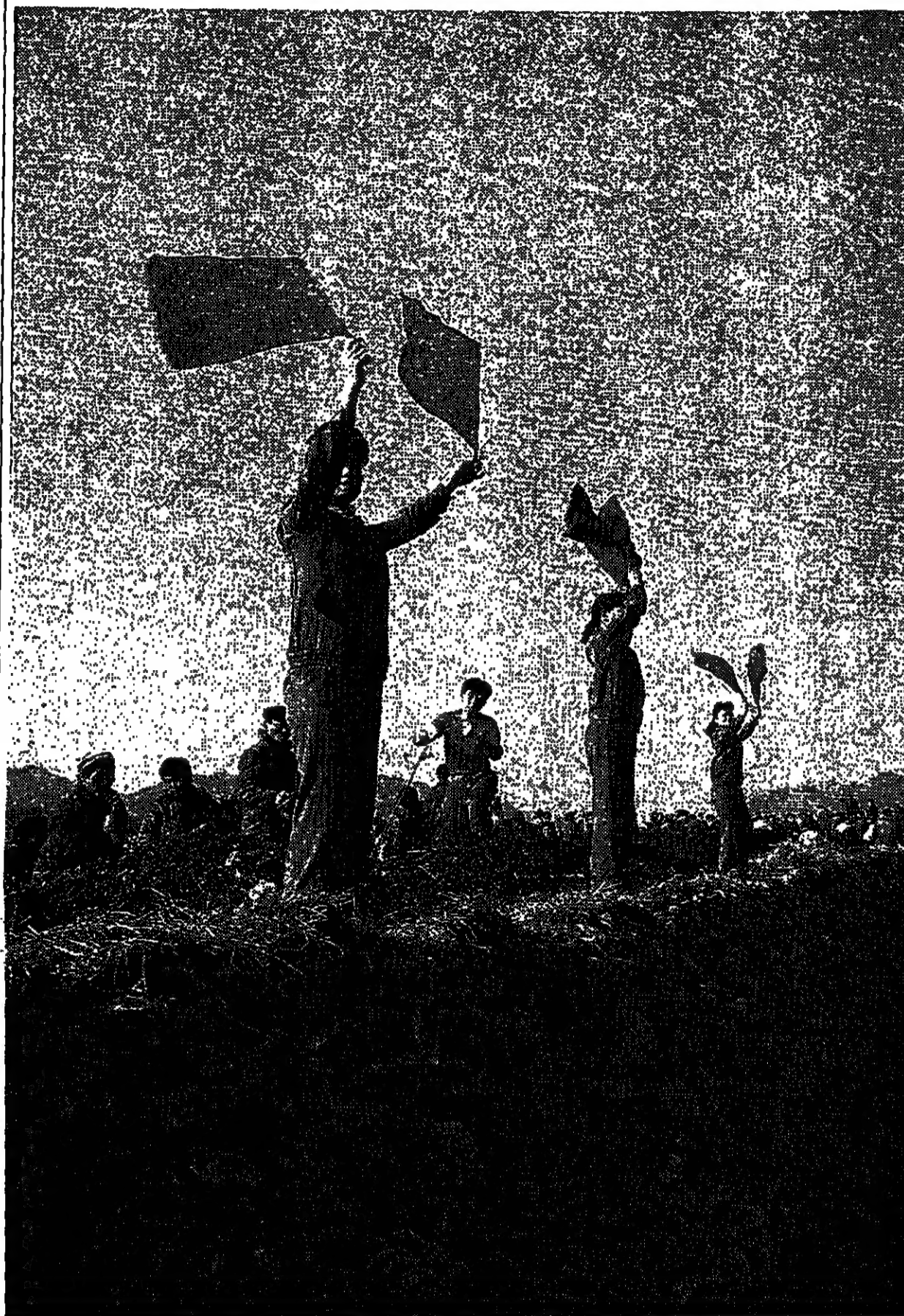
HOUSEHUNTERS fed up with Middle England might consider two unusual properties which come on the market today, each with many original features. They won't have to go to the ends of the earth, just the ends of mainland Britain.

Viewers will need their own transport, as the properties are 832 miles apart and not terribly convenient for public transport. They are Land's End and John o' Groat's, which have come on the market together for the first time, giving some 23.5 million the chance to buy Great Britain's most northerly and westerly points.

Buyers need not worry about being caught in a lengthy chain — the seller is leaving the country. The New Zealand property and investment company, Gulf Resources Pacific, bought the sites from entrepreneur Peter de Savary in separate deals in 1991, has decided to concentrate on its investments back home. Mr de Savary said yesterday he was tempted to join the bidding.

Land's End includes an hotel, cafes and shops, holiday cottages and 600,000 visitors a year. It has been substantially refurbished since it was first sold to a commercial owner in 1961. It was acquired by Mr de Savary five years later and he began to turn it into a theme park. While retain-

North Korean starvation threatens to spark refugee crisis



Cheerleaders wave red flags to encourage workers mobilised to clear North Korean flood damage PHOTOGRAPH: TREVOR PAGE

Last bastion of communism fights devastating famine

Victoria Brittain

NORTH KOREA, the secretive last bastion of communism in the world, is suffering a devastating famine which, without urgent action from Western aid organisations, threatens to unleash a flood of refugees that could destabilise the entire region.

So tightly closed has North Korea been that no one knows how many of its 22 million people are starving. But residents reached by telephone yesterday told of severe punishment for smuggling food, of families whose 16-day ration must last a month, of babies fed only on sugar water, and of an illicit free market where six eggs are

worth a worker's monthly salary. Rice, soy sauce and pickled cabbage are the sole food for the vast majority.

The land is so exhausted as the Ethiopian highlands were when famine struck there a decade ago. Loss of aid for agriculture from China and the former Soviet Union, compounded by catastrophic floods last year, led to the collapse in cereal harvests. Despite chronic weakness, peasants are fighting back with a self-reliance that has astonished Western aid officials.

Famine hospitals isolated nation, page 8; Leader comment, page 8

Blair unveils economic 'big idea'

Nick Cunniff-Bruce in Singapore and Michael White

TONY Blair will today unveil his vision of a "stakeholder society", binding all parts of the community to a common national enterprise as the key to restoring Britain's fortunes and as the economic big idea that will help beat the Tories in the election.

The Labour leader has chosen a brief excursion into the economic powerhouse of Asia as the moment to provide Labour's answer to Conservative Party sloganeering about making Britain "the enterprise centre of Europe".

A foretaste of the speech came as Mr Blair paused yesterday between engagements around Singapore, where his declared purpose is to examine ways in which the city-state has pioneered interventionist changes in the financing of cradle-to-the-grave welfare provision.

"I want Britain to be a stakeholder economy where everyone has a chance to get on and succeed, where there is a clear sense of national purpose and where we leave behind some of the battles between left and right which really are not relevant in the new global economy of today," he said.

Mr Blair's tour of Japan and Singapore — his first major visit outside Europe — was intended partly to show off "what an incoming Labour government looks like" and to reassure business by spreading New Labour's message on the dynamic Pacific Rim.

But spurred by the interest and favourable reception he feels he received from Japan's industrial barons, Mr Blair will use today's speech to businessmen in Singapore as the platform to present "the economic justification for social cohesion" — the most familiar to Asian audiences than those in Britain or the US.

The main thrust of his argument will be that "the creation of an economy where we are inventing and producing goods and services of high quality needs the engagement of the whole country. It must become a matter of national purpose and national pride."

This needs a relationship of trust between government and people, he will reason, emphasising that trust means "the recognition of a mutual purpose for which we work together and in which we all benefit". If people feel they have no stake in the economy, they feel little responsibility for it and little inclination to work for its success.

Mr Blair believes this vision will capture the high ground of economic debate — so long the preserve of the Tories — and finally shake off the image of a "tax-and-spend" party which the shadow chancellor, Gordon Brown, has been working to expunge.

In a further break with Labour's traditions, Mr Blair will argue that old strategies of delivering social justice by redistributing taxes and benefits may have served their purpose in the past.

But they do not fit the country's needs in the emerging global economy, Mr Blair will say. His comments are likely to trouble more cautious colleagues as well as leftwing MPs, some of whom are being wooed by the Scargill-led breakaway socialist party.

John Major yesterday joined ministers in deriding the Labour leader's visit and his soundbite policies: "They seem substantially to be an empty box."

Mr Blair's speech is intended to pull together all the arguments on social, economic and educational reform he has advanced in 20 months since becoming Labour leader and in the process reinforce his weekend appeal to woo One Nation Tories to Labour.

PM's unity plea, page 3; Blair ponders 'tiger' welfare, page 5; Mark Lawson, page 9

FOR SOME PEOPLE, UNWRAPPING A SWEET CAN BECOME A TASK...

...BEYOND ENDURANCE

As many people in Britain today know, Arthritis can cause severe crippling joint damage to hands and wrists, making simple tasks seem a daily battle. Feet, knees, hips, shoulders, elbows, jaw and neck can also be affected, causing unremitting pain and disability.

The Arthritis and Rheumatism Council is the only major UK charity financing medical research into all aspects of osteoarthritis and rheumatic diseases at most university hospitals and medical schools in the UK.

In 1996 we celebrate our Diamond Jubilee and there is real hope that these destructive diseases can now be beaten. With your help we can continue the battle to find a cure.

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Moscow sketch

Late Christmas comes early



James Meek

IT WAS a mean trick to play on Muscovites — and on the Russian Christmas Day, too.

It was all very well a year ago, when the foundation stone of the Church of Christ the Saviour was laid on the embankment of the Moscow River and Mayor Yuri Luzhkov promised to have the building erected within 12 months.

But then things got out of hand. Building workers were observed to be at work. Not just in the daytime — around the clock. Almost overnight, a 300ft brick and concrete replica of the destroyed 19th-century church appeared on the skyline.

Finally, yesterday, Christmas Day according to the Julian calendar still used by Orthodox Christians, the country's leaders shattered their people's faith in two of the most holy articles of post-Soviet Russia — that nothing will succeed as planned and that nothing will be built on time.

Even Mayor Luzhkov, President Yeltsin and the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Alexei II, seemed stunned at what the builders and architects had achieved in the space of a year. The president stood in the bare, scaffolding-decked interior of the building gazing up at the ceiling vaults before the three men laid a troika of final bricks.

The Patriarch called it "a miracle in our time." Both Yeltsin and Luzhkov were keen to assure Russians that the \$200 million church had not been rebuilt at the expense of state housing and welfare but that did not stop them

exploiting the full symbolic potential of the moment.

"The rebuilding of Russia's sacred places gives rise to belief in people that Russia itself, like this church, will be reborn," said the president.

This is actually the third place of worship to have been built from scratch under Mayor Luzhkov, if you count the chapels at the Nikolsky Gate and the second world war victory memorial on Poklonnaya Gora. Fired with Medicli-like enthusiasm, Luzhkov promised Muscovites another one, only bigger. "Soon, close to the Kremlin, the main church of Russian Orthodoxy will be rebuilt," he said.

The new Church of Christ the Saviour is a replica of Konstantin Ton's much-criticised design for a place of worship to commemorate Russia's victory over Napoleon. Work on the original began in 1838 and was not finished until 1883.

The church was a famous Moscow landmark until it caught the brooding eye of Stalin in 1931. In the place of the blown-up building, Stalin's architects wanted to build a Palace of the Soviets. The statue of Lenin intended to stand on the roof would by itself have been as high as the church. It never came to pass, and under Khrushchev, an outdoor swimming pool was built.

Tchalkovsky's 1812 Overture was originally commissioned for the consecration of the church — hence the artillery and the bells in the score. Had he written it today he might have included the sirens of the presidential cavalcade as it skimmied up the ramp, the accordions of an impromptu street party among onlookers, and the clumping of diverting pedestrians through the snow and ice.

Though the basic structure of the church is finished, the bare brick has to be covered with white marble outside and adorned with gilt and icons within. Its five domes will be sheathed with finely-beaten gold. All is due to be complete by 1997, the capital's 650th anniversary.

While most of the hundreds lining the crush barriers were exclaiming joy and appreciation of the new church, Boris Anisimo, 64, was perfecting his response: "There's no bread so they give us a bit of a circus."

Beijing warns that TV documentary alleging abuse in state orphanages threatens links with Britain

Rifkind heads for China row

Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong

A FUROR over allegations of deliberate starvation, sexual assault and systematic medical malpractice in Chinese orphanages cast a pall yesterday over a fence-mending visit to Hong Kong and China by the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind. China has angrily denied the allegations, describing them as a "fabrication".

Mr Rifkind arrived in Hong Kong on Saturday from Uzbekistan and is due to travel to Beijing tomorrow, the same day as Channel 4 is to broadcast a documentary that Beijing has warned could damage Sino-British rapprochement.

The programme, Return to the Dying Rooms, was made in association with Human Rights Watch, a New York-based group which yesterday released a 381-page report describing China's state-run orphanages as "assembly lines for the elimination of unwanted orphans".

The Chinese embassy in London has sent letters demanding that Channel 4 cancel the broadcast because it will "hurt the feelings of the Chinese people". In Beijing, the state council under the prime minister, Li Peng, issued a pre-emptive denial, condemning evidence com-

plied by Human Rights Watch as baseless.

"We have not seen this so-called report," said a council spokesman on Friday. "As far as we know, this report of blame against our orphanages is totally without foundation." The official New China News Agency yesterday gave a glowing account of increased vaccination and other advances in child health care.

British officials insist China's quarrel with Human Rights Watch and Channel 4 should not upset Mr Rifkind's visit.

He pledged on arrival in Hong Kong to discuss human rights in Beijing, but will avoid any direct reference to what Human Rights Watch

called the "cruelty, abuse and maligned neglect that has dominated child welfare work in China since the 1980s and now constitutes one of the country's gravest human rights problems".

The group, drawing on official documents smuggled out of China and the testimony of a Chinese doctor now living abroad, claims thousands of children have died in orphanages from deliberate neglect and abuse. Official Chinese figures from 1989 showing an orphanage death rate of more than 70 per cent in some provinces suggest conditions worse than those uncovered in Romania after the fall of Nicolae Ceausescu.

For China's leaders, prob-

ably the most sensitive charge is a claim that the fast-rising political star and former Shanghai party secretary, Wu Bangguo, orchestrated a cover-up of conditions at the Shanghai Children's Welfare Institute. The report says Mr Wu, now a Politburo member and a close ally of President Jiang Zemin, personally blocked an investigation by doctors and officials.

British officials, their eyes fixed instead on Hong Kong's transfer to China in 540 days, want to ensure a dignified exit from empire. Mr Rifkind, who spent his first day in Hong Kong out of public view on Lantau Island, voiced support for Governor Chris Patten and pledged to act as the

territory's advocate in Beijing. But with little time remaining and few diplomatic cards left to play, Britain seems most keen to avoid confrontation.

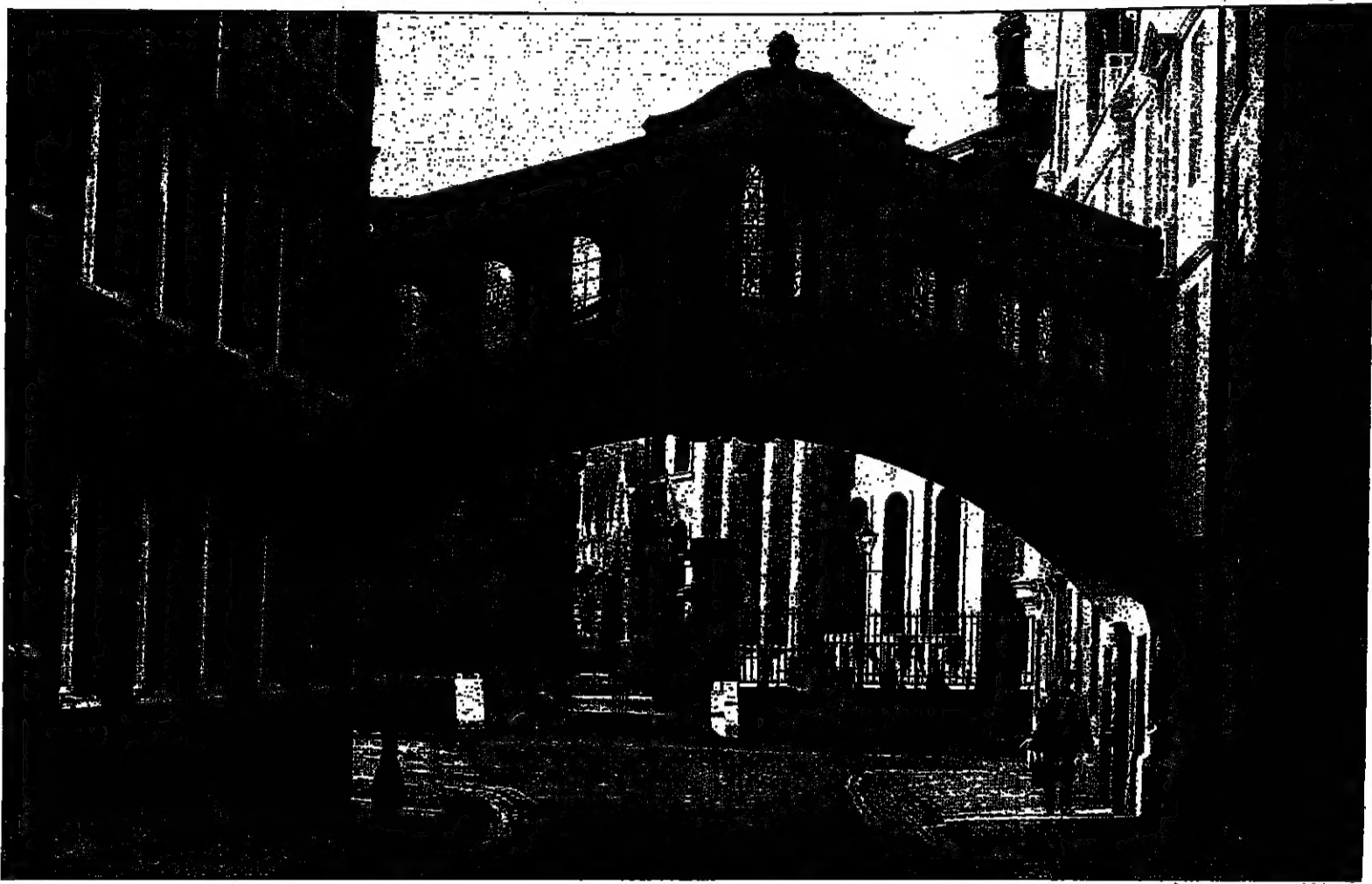
A senior Chinese official responsible for the territory, Lu Ping, last week called for a "new dawn in co-operation" between Beijing and London.

Asked about China's recent decision to exclude the territory's most popular political party from a 150-member handover committee, Mr Rifkind said: "We were disappointed that there weren't more of those who represent the democratic point of view... but it did have a broader representation than at one time seemed possible."



Councillor Richard Davy, one of the key opponents

Fight by residents against plans for club and cinema



Oxford city centre, a stone's throw from the development site, which the council would sell to finance small, local projects

'Disney' plan makes old Oxford wince

Sally Weale

THE historic university city of Oxford, whose serene sandstone and flawless quadrangles have been immortalised in literature and on screen, is at the centre of a planning row over a proposed "leisure village" just a stone's throw from the city centre.

The £17 million development, which includes a nightclub catering for 1,800, five restaurants, a bingo hall, multi-screen cinema and riv-

erside pub, has provoked fierce opposition from residents who say it is wholly inappropriate.

The scheme, which is expected to go before Oxford city council's planning committee on January 24 for a final decision, has been described by its opponents as "banal", "tasteless", and "a downmarket Disneyland".

Beyond aesthetic objections, there are fears that the nightclub will act as a magnet for drug dealers and trouble makers from outside Oxford. Opponents point out that

First Leisure, the company which will run the club, is responsible for a Blackpool nightclub attended by a young man who subsequently died as a result of taking ecstasy.

The Oppens site, which is near the railway station and is used as a coach and lorry park, is jointly owned by the Labour-run council and Railtrack. If the scheme is approved, the council will sell the plot to developers Pentith and use the proceeds to spend on small local projects.

Angry residents have expressed their concerns at two public meetings and Pentith has responded by making 60 changes to its original proposal to try to appease objectors. But Liberal Democrat councillor Richard Davy, one of the key opponents, believes the changes have not gone far enough.

"I think it is terribly sad that an historic and very beautiful city like Oxford should feel under pressure to sell an important site near the city centre for a hideous development largely in order to raise money for other projects.

"It is true that Oxford badly needs better leisure facilities for young people but they should be developed more sensitively and in better relation to the city centre."

The council argues it is simply responding to a local need for leisure facilities. John Arnold, director of property and technical services, said the site had been designated for leisure purposes in the local plan for years.

"I don't see there's a problem in having modern-style buildings close to historical buildings. Even an historic place such as Oxford requires leisure facilities," he said.

As far as drugs were concerned, he said people were worrying unnecessarily: "If people want drugs they will get them and take them. The presence of a nightclub will not make any difference to them."

First Leisure, which runs 35 nightclubs country-wide, said the ecstasy death in Blackpool had been tragic but

it did not accept responsibility as the young man had bought the drug on the street before entering the club.

Ian Freeman, of First Leisure, said it took stringent measures to ensure drugs did not come into its clubs. "People need to be reassured that First Leisure discotheques are not the kind of clubs that attract the sort of people who take drugs."

Nick Pentith, of Cheshire-based developers Pentith, said: "There are no leisure facilities in Oxford at all at the moment. But because of the historic nature of the city this new form of development is viewed with some trepidation."

"Anyone would think we had asked for planning consent for a nuclear power station."

First night

Perspiration but no inspiration

Lyn Gardner

Saltimbando Royal Albert Hall

FAST becoming Canada's most famous export, Cirque du Soleil is, like the country it hails from, spectacular to look at but rather lacking in soul.

After all the hype, their latest show, Saltimbando (the name comes from the Italian for street performer), turns out to be rather less than the greatest show on earth and slightly more than a hi-tech, balletic pop concert.

Saltimbando is a new style rock 'n' roll circus (actually, the sound track is often more New Seekers than Rolling Stones) whose success rests as much on the laser light show as it does on the contortionists or the trapeze artists. Sawdust is not in evidence.

With its commedia dell'arte-inspired costumes in bright colours, spooky Venetian carnival-style masks, a tightly choreographed cast of 45, modernist set, non-stop music and grand lighting, Saltimbando doesn't know the meaning of the word excess. It is a real feast of fools providing endless stunning images to delight the eye and almost nothing to feed the brain.

Of course, traditional circus is seldom more than a series of turns, intended to make the audience gasp in disbelief or admiration. But Saltimbando is so overblown that it diminishes rather than enhances the acts it so claims to admire.

Just when you're wondering in amazement at the high wire act, you're distracted by

another pretty lighting effect or a particularly balletic posing of the other performers.

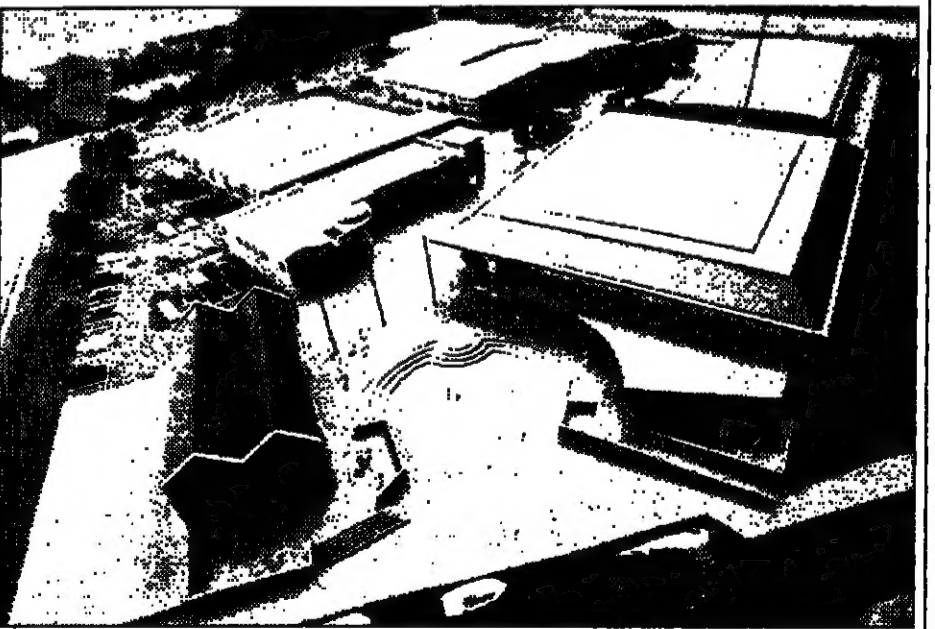
There is an overload of sensory experience, to the point where you begin to feel like a circuit board that is liable to explode under the strain.

Some of the acts are no better or worse than what you'd see with Gerry Cottle and Co but are simply made to look more impressive by the sheer numbers involved. However, there are undeniably exhilarating moments when the show's component parts work in harmony rather than pulling against each other. An indifferent trapeze act turns suddenly into a daring swing accompanied by pulsating music that celebrates that marvellous feeling of flying that most of us leave behind with the childhood garden swing, and the final acrobatic bungee ballet is beautifully conceived and executed.

But what this show really lacks is a whiff of danger and a sense of anarchy. The clowns are too tidy and well behaved, the choreographer is obsessed with symmetry, and the whole show is so well drilled that it loses any feeling of spontaneity. What one misses is the vulgarity that characterises more traditional circus.

Watching Saltimbando, one is irresistibly reminded of two things: old newsreels of pre-war Health and Beauty rallies and naff '70s musicals with circus settings where every-one dresses up in patchwork cast-offs. I can't imagine that too many people would dream of running away to join Cirque de Soleil.

At the Royal Albert Hall until January 14. Box Office 0171 589 8212.



A model of the £17 million scheme, which includes a nightclub, pub and five restaurants

£42m lottery jackpot split three ways but winners lie low

Sally Weale

WITH an air of weary anticlimax a Camelot spokeswoman revealed yesterday that only one of the three winners of the £42 million lottery jackpot had come forward.

By the time the National Lottery telephone hotline at Aintree closed at 3pm, two of the three winners — who will each receive £14,002,870 — had yet to declare themselves and claim their winnings.

Even the one who had come forward chose to remain anonymous, meaning Camelot was not able to reveal whether it was an individual or a syndicate.

As the size of the double rollover jackpot continued to

attract criticism, the Prime Minister — who revealed he was one of the few not to have bought a ticket for Saturday's draw — gave the lottery his full backing.

"Here is a way to provide resources for good causes on a scale we have never before seen in this country — something like £300 million a year for each of five good causes, including charities," he told BBC TV's Breakfast with Frost.

The Bishop of Coventry, the Right Rev Simon Barrington-Ward, however, renewed calls for the lottery to be scrapped. "I would like to see it abolished, but I would also like to see the prizes reduced, and that is the more realistic of the two options at the moment."

Camelot's commercial operations director, Norman Hawkins, defended the company's profit, saying the lottery, which was the biggest in the world, was operated on a low profit margin of less than a penny in the pound.

An estimated nine out of 10 British adults bought at least one ticket for the record draw with sales worth £128 million in seven days, of which almost half, £60 million, were sold on Saturday. The normal weekly turnover is £65 million.

A Camelot spokeswoman said 53 lottery players picked five of the six winning numbers — which were 2, 3, 4, 13, 42, 44 — and the bonus ball 34, winning £104,747 each.

A total of 1,524 guessed five numbers earning £2,276 each.

100,140 picked four of the numbers and will win £76, while 2,282,389 people guessed three numbers and won the £10 fixed prize. The total prize money is £21,436,302, while an estimated £38 million will go to good causes.

A number of readers of the Sun are set to share one of the big prizes after winning with a row of numbers given to them free on a card inside the paper. The Sun said it had won a match five plus bonus prize of £104,747 with one line of numbers which had been issued to about 100 readers. Within two hours of the draw, 31 had telephoned a hotline to claim their share.

Next week's jackpot is estimated to be £9 million.

Leader comment, page 8

Soil and water may hold the key to latest cancer drugs

Chris Mihill Medical Correspondent

NEW anti-cancer drugs might result from research on compounds derived from common bacteria in soil and water, scientists say today.

Researchers for the Cancer Research Campaign have found a way of cloning azino-

mycins, compounds isolated from soil and water micro-organisms. Preliminary studies have found them to work against various cancer cells.

They appear to attack both strands of DNA — not just one, as with conventional drugs — potentially making them more effective.

Recently, yew tree needles have produced the anti-cancer drug Taxol.

Advertisement for Alliance Francaise. Text: 'What's the difference between us and other French teachers?' Includes logo and contact information.

Arabic text: 'صكنا من الامم' and other illegible characters.

'Tying defence sales to the survival of governments or factions can lead to disaster'

Union anger at Vickers over 'whims' of foreign regimes

Chris Barrie and Seumas Milne

TRADER union officials at Vickers reacted with anger and dismay yesterday as the political storm intensified over the company's role in the expulsion order against the Saudi dissident Mohammed al-Mas'ari.

As Vickers managers were locked in crisis talks with advisers after the revelation that its chief executive Sir Colin Chandler had plotted with other industrialists to silence Mr Mas'ari, the president of the Amalgamated Electrical and Engineering Union complained that his members were being held to ransom by government policy over the Mas'ari case.

Davey Hall, AEEU president from today, and for several years the principal union

official covering the Vickers plant in Newcastle upon Tyne, said: "We want a long-term, reliable and consistent future for the defence industry and not one that is based on the whims of this or that regime in the Middle East or any other part of the world."

"We've seen in the past with countries like Iran that tying defence sales to the survival of particular governments or factions can lead to disaster."

Mike Summersby, president of Tyne Bridge Conservatives, said people in the North-east would inevitably see Mr Mas'ari's case in terms of "job protection". He added: "We have been hit harder than most when it comes to losing jobs."

Kevin Flynn, co-ordinator of the Newcastle Unemployed Workers' Centre, said it was "laughable for a government which had created the highest

unemployment levels ever in our area to talk about a threat to jobs, when they had every opportunity to prevent the destruction of the shipbuilding and mining industries and failed to intervene."

Vickers employs 740 people at its Newcastle factory, 750 at its Leeds plant and 160 in Wolverhampton, but the company's manufacturing supports about 6,000 people when engineering sub-contractors are included, according to a study by York University.

The company is bidding to supply Saudi Arabia with Challenger 2 battle tanks as part of a £3 billion order sought with other defence companies such as GKN and VSEL.

The order would form a lucrative follow-on to the Al Yamamah oil-for-weapons deal signed in the mid-1980s, and comes as the defence and aerospace industries struggle

to win business in the face of military spending cuts.

David Clelland, Labour MP for Tyne Bridge, said he was concerned about the effect the row may have on jobs in his constituency.

He also suggested the public would dislike the spectacle of the British government, democratically elected, being dictated to by Saudi Arabia.

Canon Peter Dodd, an industrial chaplain in Newcastle, said "a great deal of money" had been invested by Vickers in Tyneside, which was grateful for the skilled jobs in a region which had witnessed the collapse of the shipbuilding industry with the loss of 20,000 jobs.

Vickers employees would find the Saudi issue rather remote.

The problem of military exports versus free speech was "an intellectual poser" of more concern to broadsheet

readers in London than to workers at Vickers, he said.

MPs are to demand an inquiry into whether the circumstances surrounding the Government's deportation order against Mr Mas'ari involved an abuse of public funds, writes Richard Norton-Taylor.

Members of the Commons public accounts committee are to ask for an investigation into whether the plan to deport Mr Mas'ari to Dominica was linked in any way to the Government's decision to quadruple foreign aid to the Caribbean island, from £500,000 to £2 million.

Robert Sheldon, Labour chairman of the public accounts committee, refused to comment on the disclosure that Andrew Green, Britain's ambassador to Saudi Arabia, is a non-executive director at Vickers, but he made it clear he had not been told.



Milton Keynes sculptor Robert Koenig is seeking a home for his sculpture Boy and Girl, carved from a 200-year-old cedar, which is too big for his studio. PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN ROBERTSON

Dominica opposition to Mas'ari move grows

Seumas Milne

MOHAMMED al-Mas'ari, the Saudi dissident threatened with deportation to Dominica, is due to meet the leader of one of the Caribbean island's main opposition parties in London today, as discontent about his arrival continued in the capital of Roseau.

Rosie Douglas, leader of the leftist Dominica Labour

Party, is visiting Britain by chance and is expected to join the campaign against Mr Mas'ari's expulsion from Britain.

Opposition to the move in Dominica has already been voiced by the former prime minister, Eugenia Charles, who threatened to organise a blockade of the airport if the expulsion went ahead.

Dame Eugenia, who invited United States troops to invade Grenada in 1983, said Dominicans should

prevent Mr Mas'ari from disembarking at the island's tiny airport. Dominica, which had "enough problems without importing problems", would be unable to protect the Saudi exile, she said.

Dominica's acceptance of Mr Mas'ari has also been denounced by the island's main opposition leader, Brian Alleyne, of the right-wing Dominica Freedom Party, who said it threatened Dominica's own at-

tempts to "develop relations with countries like Saudi Arabia".

He also demanded to know what financial gain had been secured from Britain. Together Mr Alleyne and Mr Douglas have enough votes in Dominica's parliament to vote down the minority administration headed by Edison James, the prime minister.

Mr James said that Britain had given him assurances that Mr Mas'ari had

"not been involved in any criminal or terrorist activities, either in Saudi Arabia or in Britain".

The Foreign Office continued to insist there had been no "quid pro quo" increase in aid to Dominica, but the Overseas Development Administration said that British aid to Dominica was now "on track" to increase to £2 million from £500,000 last year as a result of the clearance of debt arrears.

US envoy's return could halt wave of IRA killings

David Sharrock
Ireland Correspondent

HOPES are rising that the wave of IRA murders of petty criminals which claimed five lives in as many weeks is drawing to a close, as the three-man commission on illegal arms returns to Belfast this week.

Sinn Fein yesterday made its second comment in three days on the murders, after it was goaded by John Major into a response to his challenge to stop the killings. Mr Major's hard tone was prefaced by his belief that the murders would stop once the international body, led by President Clinton's special envoy to Northern Ireland, George Mitchell, returns to the province and concludes its report.

The Prime Minister is likely to have made his assessment on the basis of briefings from Dublin about Sinn Fein and the IRA's intentions. A Sinn Fein delegation met Irish government officials on Friday, after which the party's vice-president, Pat Doherty, said Sinn Fein was trying to halt the killings.

Mr Doherty also said he ex-

pected to be in talks with both the British and Irish governments within a fortnight. The tenor of his comments was in marked contrast to those made 10 days ago by his colleague, Mitchell McLaughlin, when he said that British intransigence could lead to a resumption of hostilities.

Yesterday, however, by echoing the remarks of Mr Doherty, he appeared to give credence to Dublin's hope that the peace process is back on track. Mr McLaughlin was asked if Sinn Fein would use its influence to halt the murders. "I can answer that question in the affirmative."

"Sinn Fein is in fact attempting to use its influence to ensure that it doesn't happen, but we do not have the control to exercise over that situation that has been alleged. We never had that amount of control."

Dublin believes that the international body's report, which is expected in 10 days, will lead to an ending of the killings and punishment beatings, and possibly to a newly worded, stronger commitment by the IRA to maintaining its ceasefire, possibly along the lines of the loyalists' "no first strike" pledge.

In those circumstances it would be hard to imagine Mr Major rejecting the report because it had not found in favour of his stated preference for a token handover of weapons as a confidence-building gesture.

The commission will be in London this Thursday, Dublin on Friday, and Belfast on Saturday.

Meanwhile the Ulster Unionist MP, Ken Maginnis, said the January 18 target date for its report should be extended.

"I think there should be at least another six weeks' latitude, given that there is every prospect of an inconclusive report coming out."

The commission was asked by Mr Major and the Irish prime minister to "identify and advise on a suitable and acceptable method for full and verifiable decommissioning, and report whether there is a clear commitment on the part of those in possession of such arms to work to achieve that".

It is believed the IRA has up to two tonnes of Semtex, 1,200 semi-automatic rifles, and as many as 20 surface-to-air missiles hidden on both sides of the border.

MPs see end to NHS dentistry

Chris Mihill
Medical Correspondent

MOST MPs believe dental treatment on the National Health Service will be available only to children and the poor within a few years, according to a survey published today.

The survey, for the British Dental Association, found that 44 per cent of Conservative MPs and 61 per cent of Labour MPs asked believe that within 10 years those who can afford to pay will be ineligible for NHS dentistry.

The association said that the survey highlighted the difficulties people already had in finding an NHS dentist unless they were poor or young. It is calling on the Government to increase funding to ensure NHS dentistry is available to everyone.

The survey of 160 MPs, by Harris Research, found that many had had complaints from constituents about the difficulties in finding an NHS dentist.

Nearly one in two MPs (48 per cent) had received complaints, including 48 per cent of Conservatives. The Tory MPs received more complaints about difficulties in finding a dentist than they did about British Gas and local electricity companies, and the complaints were on a par with those received about local water companies.

Nearly three-quarters of Labour MPs (74 per cent) and 3 per cent of Conservative

MPs said the Government was primarily to blame for the difficulties.

Bill Allen, chairman of the council of the British Dental Association, said: "The findings are a terrible indictment of the funding of NHS dentistry under this government."

"Government underfunding has forced many dentists out of the NHS. This survey confirms our fears that there is a serious lack of dental services available on the NHS in many parts of the country. If the Government does not take radical action to increase funding... the difficulties experienced by patients in finding an NHS dentist will get worse."

One-third of patients on dentists' lists are entitled to free treatment. The two-thirds of adults who pay for care contribute 80 per cent of the cost of treatment.

Over the past three years a growing number of dentists have said NHS fees are too small to cover costs, and increasing numbers will accept only private patients.

The intake of graduates training to become clinical psychologists needs to virtually double in order to meet the growing demands for psychological therapies in mental health, disabilities and other areas of medicine, the British Psychological Society says today.

There are 2,875 clinical psychologists working in the NHS, but according to NHS Executive figures there will be a need for 3,243 by 1998/99.

Carling reflects on reports that his wife is to seek a divorce

Sally Weale

WILL Carling was last night reflecting on reports that his estranged wife is to seek a divorce, but a friend said the England rugby captain would be "disappointed" if that was the outcome.

The statement issued by Mr Carling last September announcing their separation after weeks of speculation about his friendship with the Princess of Wales stressed it was temporary.

Reports yesterday, however, suggested that no reunion is expected. It is said that Mrs Carling will consult a lawyer to begin divorce proceedings in the next few weeks.

The reports, which come as the princess considers her own options following the Queen's plea for a speedy divorce, will ring alarm bells at Buckingham Palace, where there will be concern that the princess could be named in divorce proceedings.

Mr Carling, aged 30, has always denied having an affair with the princess. Though Princess Diana was candid in her Panorama interview about her relationship with James Hewitt, she did not mention Mr Carling.

Last night a Buckingham Palace spokesman declined to comment.

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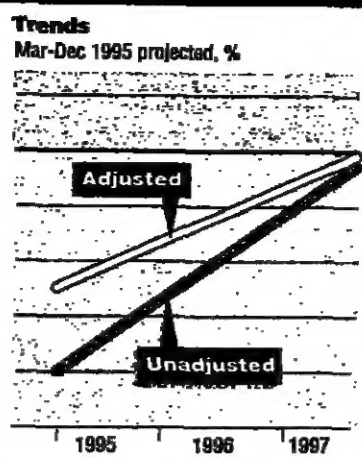
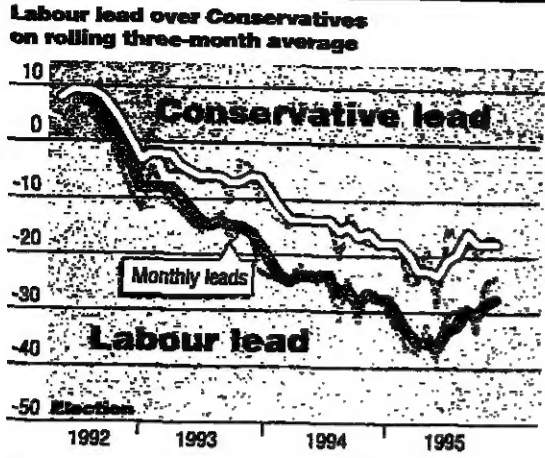
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Martin Linton finds upturn for Major in ICM's 3-monthly average on voting intentions, dating from his leadership challenge in June

Poll trend holds out hope for Tories

What Major has to do



JOHAN MAJOR has a momentous task ahead in 1996, but the annual report of the Guardian's pollster ICM, released today, shows that the Conservatives have almost certainly turned the corner.

The monthly opinion polls have shown little change since the summer, but the rolling three-monthly ICM average shows a definite upturn, from an exceptionally low base, in the second half of 1995.

The three-monthly average can even identify the point when the recovery started: June — the month when Mr Major challenged his critics to a leadership election.

That will cheer Mr Major and his party chairman,

Brian Mawhinney, who have so far failed to find evidence in the polls that the leadership election has kickstarted their political recovery.

Month-on-month fluctuations and the confusion between adjusted and unadjusted polls have disguised a trend that has emerged in the past nine months.

On the adjusted and unadjusted figures, the three-monthly average follows an upward trend. It continues, the Tories could almost close the gap on Labour by May 1997, the general election deadline. The Labour lead will be 1 per cent adjusted and 3 per cent unadjusted, in December ICM shows Labour on 48 per cent adjusted and the Tories on 31 per cent.

ICM's report also gives Mr

Major and Dr Mawhinney clues to the voters they most need to win back if they are to stage what would still be a remarkable recovery.

Comparing the largest survey of voters after the 1992 election — conducted for the Rowntree Reform Trust — with polls for the whole of 1995, ICM can measure how far each group of voters has swung from the Tories.

Among the housing tenure groups, council tenants have swung the least — 11 per cent. People who have finished paying for their houses have swung by the average — 14 per cent. But people still paying a mortgage have swung the most — 17 per cent.

Among the income groups, the top and bottom have swung the least, and it is the

C1 and C2 middle-income groups — most likely to be struggling to pay mortgages — that have swung the most.

Among the age groups, the oldest have swung the least and the youngest, the 18-24s — again a group likely to be struggling with high mortgage payments — that have swung the most.

Mortgage holders form 43 per cent of the population, a group seen as vital to the Government's electoral chances.

That may help to explain why the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, seemed more concerned in his Budget strategy to cut the interest rate than the basic rate of income tax. The Budget failed to have an impact on Labour's lead on voting intention, 17 points in November and December, but

it did halve its lead as "the party with the best policies on the economy" from 18 points to nine.

Until Black Wednesday in September 1992, when Britain left the European exchange rate mechanism, the Government was always ahead of Labour on this economic index, which may explain why the Tories were able to close the gap on voting intentions before the 1992 election.

As long as people believed a Tory government would run the economy better, Labour's lead had a soft underbelly. People could be persuaded to switch back to the Tories when the election campaign concentrated their minds on the essentials. Now, however, Labour has a 33-24 per cent lead on economic policy.

Portillo 'damned by faint praise'

Michael White on how the stock of the Defence Secretary has taken a tumble

WHEN John Major yesterday praised Michael Portillo as a "highly talented" member of the Conservative Party's broad church, some listening Tory MPs were delighted. But others thought they heard the Prime Minister damning a turbulent colleague with faint praise after a year in which the Defence Secretary's stock has tumbled.

Once many centrist Conservative MPs were resigned to the prospect that Mr Portillo — just 20 days younger than Tony Blair — would emerge as a charismatic new Tory leader under a Labour government. Now it is much easier to find old sweets saying "he's blown it" or "if he wins, I'm not sure I'll want to stay in the party."

The Prime Minister gave no hint of reservations. "Michael is immensely patriotic, he's immensely proud of this country. There isn't a politician in the land, perhaps in retrospect, who wouldn't have phrased something differently," Mr Major told Sir David Frost on the Breakfast with Frost programme, when pressed about the Tory conference speech which brought both fury and disdain down on

the Defence Secretary's head. One leftist ex-minister said: "Less than fulsome, I thought." A rightwing Portillo-barker retorted: "A really big plug for Michael."

Blair aides watching the guest on the Frost sofa were also impressed. So disruptive have Mr Portillo's interventions become, the Labour leadership has decided to launch an official Portillo-watch to stir things up still further.

To Labour's delight Mr Portillo also angered some Tory MPs last week by saying that since Emma Nicholson was a Euro-federalist with "a history of disloyalty" it was right that she should join the Lib-Dems. They saw it as a divisive, sectarian response.

A last-ditch supporter of Mrs Thatcher's premiership, Mr Portillo thrives on controversy. What raised his profile so early in the new year was last week's decision, hastily reversed once Downing Street got wind of it, to announce the sale of Admiralty Arch at the top of the Mall in Whitehall.

Yesterday Portillo aides went out of their way to stress that their man knew nothing about a decision taken by the Department of the Environ-

Mixed messages

"We will not allow Brussels to control our defence policy... Britain will not be any Conservative government not to fight... Britain is blessed with brave soldiers, sailors and airmen, willing to give their lives. For Britain. Not for Brussels." Michael Portillo, Blackpool, October 11

"He made an ugly, juvenile, unpleasant speech." Paddy Ashdown

"They were light-hearted remarks, rabble-rousing remarks which worked on the day." John Redwood

"He has gone over the top. He has damaged the Conservative image, he has damaged himself." Sir Leon Brittan

"I stripped away all the waffle and fudge and any Euro-speak and I said that any Conservative government is not going to allow Britain to be drawn into a European superstate. I don't regret any of the language I have used." Michael Portillo, BBC1

"The Liberal Democrats are a federalist party and if that is what Emma believes in then she is right to leave us. But it is very silly to say that the party has tilted to the right. That's completely incredible." Michael Portillo, January 1, Radio 4

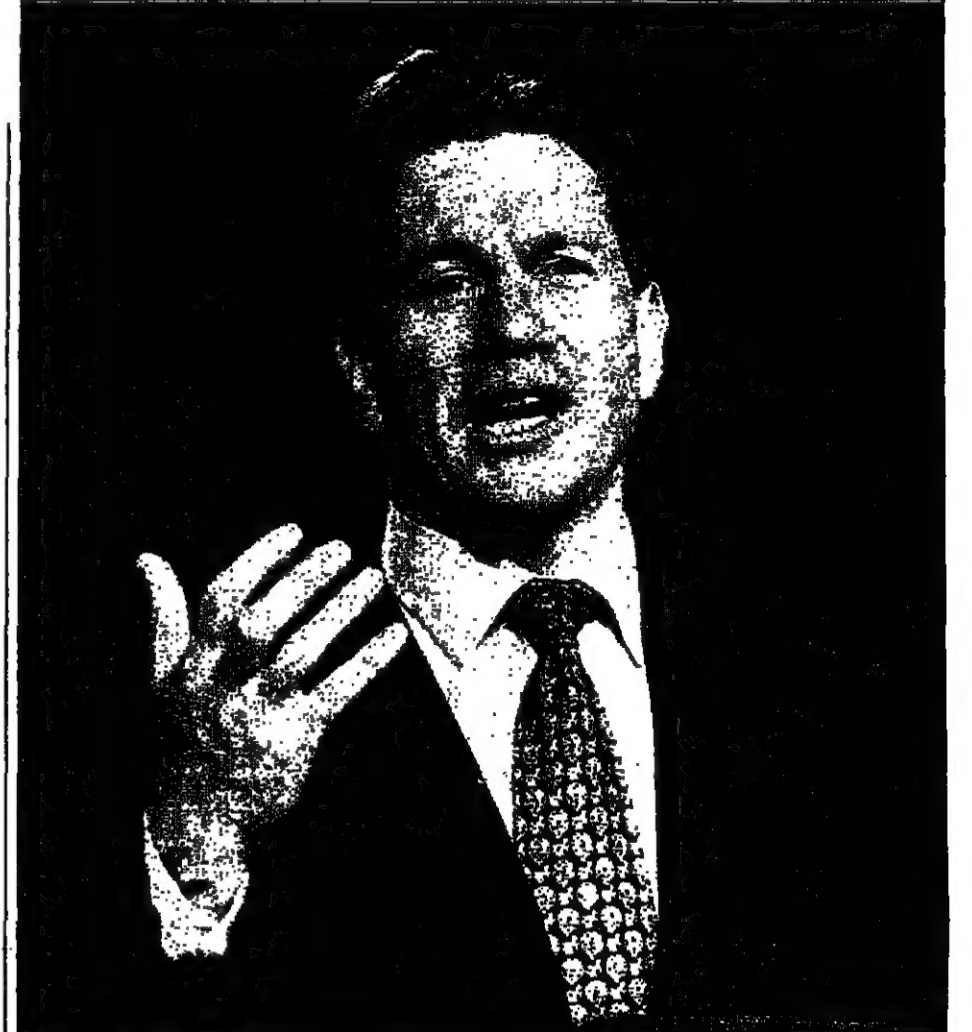
to pick up the leadership post that which the Prime Minister threw down in July.

Fearing to strike, he also hesitated initially to back Mr Major and allowed eager supporters (the Hart factor again, say critics) to install phone lines at a Westminster house that would have served as his campaign HQ in the second round.

When the victorious Major reshuffled his team, Mr Portillo was shifted from employment, where anti-European posturing is easy, to defence, where a chap must either spend or cut, thus offending either the economic right or the Union Jack right.

Then came the conference speech with its bombastic rhetoric about "not allowing Brussels to control our defence policy" and "harmonising uniforms and cap badges" — not to mention the "don't mess with Britain" passage about the SAS. The speech of fabled MPs and senior officers alike.

His capacity to articulate what grassroots Tory activists feel makes the son of a MP who doubts John Redwood's staying power will keep them in their portfolios.



Michael Portillo... disruptive interventions and thriving on controversy

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Blair ponders 'tiger' welfare

Forced savings scheme interests Labour, writes Nick Cumming-Bruce

AS Tony Blair makes the rounds of Singaporean ministers and business leaders today, the shadow social affairs minister, Chris Smith, will arrive for a close inspection of the social security system that helps nourish this Asian tiger.

Mr Blair left no doubt yesterday that Singapore's compulsory savings scheme, the Central Provident Fund, is a subject of particular interest as he raises the goal of a stakeholder economy and commits Labour to the wholesale reform of Britain's social security system.

"It is very interesting to our agenda to see how we can get the best out of our welfare system," Mr Blair said. "It is not functioning the way that it should. It is not helping those who are the poorest in our society nor is it providing people with the encouragement and incentives they need to get back into work."

The Labour leader emphasises the dangers of drawing parallels between countries with different systems and circumstances. Privatisation of welfare is not on his agenda but finding a way to bring savings in Britain up from under 20 per cent of GDP and closer to Singapore's rate of over 40 per cent most certainly is.

Singaporean analysts did not miss the irony of British politicians coming back to study a savings system first conceived by Singapore's British colonial rulers. They introduced a savings scheme based on contributions of 5 per cent of workers' salaries, with contributions split evenly between employer and employee. Lee Kuan Yew, the former premier, kicked it into a higher gear, raising contributions to a hefty 40 per cent of wages for all workers under the age of 55, paying a modest 2.5 per cent interest.

The scheme is designed to look after the needs of workers when they retire in a system that offers no social security benefits or subsidised health service.

But the 58 billion Singapore dollars (nearly £28 billion) in the fund provides a massive capital resource for the kind of long term infrastructure development schemes that make this tiny island state the envy of its neighbours.

The fund, Mr Blair said, has certainly done the job for people in Singapore.

Mr Smith, however, may find that depends on who you talk to. Singaporeans may relish the pristine and efficient physical environment built in the past 30 years with the help of their money.

But even Singaporeans, weaned in a nanny state that reserves the right to dictate how they conduct their lives, chafe under restrictions on when they can spend their savings, and how they can spend them, even after retirement.

Nicholson rules out byelection

Geoffrey Gibbs

EMMA NICHOLSON yesterday vowed to fight on as MP for West Devon and Torridge in the face of calls for a byelection and separate allegations that her new party had used dirty tricks to influence a newspaper telephone poll on the issue.

An ICM poll of 500 constituents for yesterday's Observer showed more than half believed she should resign and bring about a byelection.

But Ms Nicholson, who returns to the Commons tomorrow for the first time since her defection to the Liberal Democrats, said she had been overwhelmed by the letters of support she had received for her decision to quit the Conservatives. She had no intention of standing down.

"I have been utterly clear from day one when I said I did not want a byelection. The Government has it within its powers to stall the date of a byelection and I don't want to deprive my constituents of their voice in Parliament."

A telephone poll conducted last week among readers of

the Western Morning News came out three to one against the suggestion that Ms Nicholson should resign.

The result was in marked contrast to an earlier poll carried out by Westcountry Television and to the ICM poll in the Observer.

In a blistering attack on the Liberal Democrats on Saturday, the Plymouth based newspaper said Willie Rennie, the party's campaigns officer for Devon and Cornwall, had admitted trying to influence the result by contacting organisers in West Country constituencies to encourage them to take part.

It accused the Lib-Dems in a leading article of "disgraceful dirty tricks" to manipulate the outcome of the poll. It said the paper and its readers had been misled about the true state of public opinion, and called the party's behaviour sleazy and cynical.

Mr Rennie could not be contacted for comment yesterday. A national party spokesman dismissed the paper's allegations.

Ralph Dunn, deputy editor of the WMN said the polls were carried out in good faith.

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"No matter what I do, what talents and abilities I display, I will never be seen as a bright young man, I'll only ever be old George who hasn't done badly, has he?"

G2 cover story

Communists plot assault on Yeltsin

Winning the general election was one thing, having a crack at the presidency is quite another. David Hearst in Moscow looks at the party's options

THE victors of last month's general election, Gennady Zyuganov's Communist Party of the Russian Federation, meet in secret this week to discuss their tactics for the second stage of their assault on power: unseating Boris Yeltsin from the throne.

After taking 157 seats, more than a third of the new Duma, party leaders are sanguine about their chances of winning the presidential election in June. One central committee member said: "We need a strategy, not to gain as much as we can but lose as little as we can."

Acutely aware of the party's own ideological divisions, the personal ambitions which will prevent the opposition from fielding a single candidate, and the expectations of their voters, Mr Zyuganov is likely to put his pragmatism to full use.

One of the first signs of this will be a marked restraint in the carve-up of important Duma posts. Mr Zyuganov is understood to support a non-Communist in its politically powerful Speaker.

Recalling the example of the former Speaker, an ex-Communist, Ivan Rybkin, who got so close to Mr Yeltsin that his party failed miserably in the elections, the Communist leadership will not seek the limelight by proposing one of their own for the post.

For one thing, the Speaker is also a permanent member of Mr Yeltsin's kitchen cabinet, the security council, and although the voting is secret, Mr Rybkin has to share at least collective responsibility for the botched assault on Chechnya.

For another, a "Red Speaker" would be held responsible by the rank-and-file for not confronting the government on its economic policies, while at the same time providing an easy target for the presidential administration.

Zyuganov could only win if he represented a broader political spectrum than his party

First, the Communist victory, which exceeded their own expectations, created a huge wave of expectation which could easily turn sour, particularly as parliament is constitutionally weak.

The second is the calculation that Mr Zyuganov could only win if he represented the interests of a broader political spectrum than his party.

Although they have formally split from Mr Zyuganov's party and are different entities in Moscow, locally their supporters co-operate with the Communists.

The ideological distance between a Stalinist like the former journalist Mr Ampilov and Mr Zyuganov is great. Mr Shenin believes in the forcible reinstatement of the Soviet Union, and his party thinks it is so close to the old Communist Party of the Soviet Union that it recently held its "30th Congress", as if the old party still lives.

Mr Shenin and Mr Ampilov will not be easy to dispense with. Their bloc got closer than any of their rivals to the 5 per cent barrier, which allows parties into the Duma.

World news in brief

Greek opposition demands new leader

GREECE'S opposition will call for a vote of no confidence in the Socialist government today, claiming the protracted illness of the prime minister, Andreas Papandreu, has left the country virtually leaderless.

French striker 'beaten'

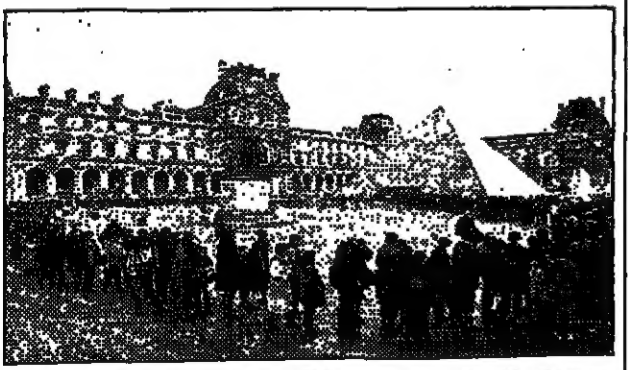
THE TRANSPORT strikes in Marseille took a violent turn at the weekend, a striker was taken to hospital after clashes with police trying to force 500 metro, tram and bus drivers back to work.

Huge storm hits Washington

A WINTER storm of "historic proportions" hit Washington yesterday. A national weather service meteorologist, Sondra Young, said the "historic" blizzard was likely to bring more than 2ft of snow to the Washington area.

Liberians face starvation

About 15,000 people who fled renewed fighting in north-western Liberia are threatened with starvation, aid workers said yesterday.



Under a new ruling, visitors did not pay to enter the Louvre museum in Paris yesterday, the first Sunday of the month

Bahrain mosque targeted

RIOT police were back in action in Bahrain at the weekend, dissidents said, as the government began a new crackdown. Tear gas, rubber bullets and glass-particle cluster bullets were fired at worshippers attempting to enter a mosque outside the capital Manama.

I don't know what sort of new year you had, but mine was pretty exciting. On December 31, I woke up to find I was the most hated man in Italy.
John Hooper's diary

Wanted war criminal remains hero at home

An indicted colonel who led Serb troops is remembered with pride in Montenegro, writes Jane Perlez

DURING his rapid rise through the ranks of the Yugoslav army, Lieutenant-Colonel Veselin Slijivancanin was regarded as the paradigm of a fierce soldier.

A tall barrel-chested man of 41 with a black mustache, he was once assigned as a bodyguard to Tito. Later he was invited to go shooting with President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia.

He won accolades in the press and from the public for defiantly standing in the door of the hospital in Vukovar in 1992, during the war that followed Croatia's break from Yugoslavia, and barring entry to the International Committee of the Red Cross, saying: "This is my country."

The scene was shown many times on Serbian television. In November the colonel was indicted by the international war crimes tribunal at The Hague, the first of three officers from the Serbian-led Yugoslav army — as opposed to Bosnian Serbs — to be charged with war crimes.

The indictment says that as Col Slijivancanin was stopping the relief workers entering the hospital, nearly 300 men inside were being hustled out the back door and taken to a farm, where they were shot and then buried in a mass grave.

Nearly four years later, and more than a month after the indictment, Col Slijivancanin is still a hero in Serbia and here in Montenegro, the two republics that constitute what is left of Yugoslavia.

Acquaintances in Podgorica, formerly known as Titograd, where Col Slijivancanin has commanded a brigade of the Yugoslav army for the last two years, said he came from a "fine family" and could not have committed the crimes he is charged with.

They fondly recalled the first anniversary of the Croat surrender of Vukovar to the Serbs, when the colonel's mother appeared on Yugoslav television telling of her son's exploits.

Even after the indictment, his reputation was fortified when a Belgrade business gave him a car for his role in the battle for Vukovar.

The indictment also names General Mile Mrksic and Captain Miroslav Radovic of the Yugoslav army. They are charged with supervising the same killings. The issuing of international arrest warrants for the three men has been met by silence from Mr Milosevic.

The president of Montenegro, Momir Bulatovic, a close ally of Mr Milosevic who attended the Bosnian peace talks in Dayton, Ohio, with him, said the peace agreement did not require the extradition of indicted officers.

Classical co-operation, such as arrest and extradition, is not part of the Dayton agreement," Mr Bulatovic said.

Even after the indictment, his reputation was fortified when a Belgrade business gave him a car for his role in the battle for Vukovar.

The island's boast of a low crime rate is a standard part of its advertising to attract tourists. Close to a million Britons taking their holidays here each year. It is also home to two British bases with 10,000 servicemen and their families, and the regional headquarters of hundreds of international companies.



Colonel Veselin Slijivancanin is accused of stopping relief workers entering a hospital in Vukovar in 1992 as nearly 300 non-Serbian men were hustled out of it and later shot dead

According to the existing legal tenets, we are obliged to investigate whether the allegations against certain citizens are true. We don't have constitutional powers to extradite our citizens to the international tribunal.

The indictment has not been announced by the state-controlled Yugoslav press.

Nor have the earlier indictments of 40 people — 42 Bosnian Serbs, including their leaders General Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic, and 7 Bosnian Croats.

The peace accord signed by the warring parties in Paris on December 14 calls on them to co-operate with The Hague and gives tribunal officials

everything. Be careful". In another incident, a senior officer tipped off a suspect that the police were due to search his home for guns.

The force's reputation was already badly tarnished by revelations in November that officers in the seaside resort

the right of access to people and sites involved in the conflict.

Among the penalties for non-compliance with the tribunal is the reimposition of economic sanctions.

Since the signing in Paris the Milosevic government has not changed its policy of behavior toward the tribunal, according to a tribunal spokesman, Christian Charrier. It has refused to let the tribunal open a liaison office in the capital, Belgrade.

A Bulgarian United Nations official, Deyan Mihov, has been appointed to head the office and was supposed to take up the post several months ago.

The Belgrade authorities had not responded to the arrest warrants for the three Yugoslav army officers sent to them on November 9, Mr Charrier said.

For Col Slijivancanin, life apparently continues as usual. He sits at the Hotel Crna Gora, the best in town, and socialises regularly at the officers' club.

He comes from a fine family, he wouldn't want to do anything to ruin their name, said Savo Radujar, a taxi driver whose family comes from the same region as Col Slijivancanin and whose brother serves in the same brigade.

He was a professional soldier. Whatever he did, he did on orders. A recent profile of Col Slijivancanin in the independent magazine Monitor paints a different picture.

It quotes him as saying in 1992 that the destruction of Vukovar should be taken as a "warning". Enemies who tried to settle scores with violence would be met with similar destruction, he said.

It also quotes him as saying that the Vukovar hospital patients were taken as prisoners of war to Ovcara, the farm mentioned in the indictment as the site of the mass grave, but were "secured with our guards".

They were then taken to Sremska Mitrovica, a prison in the Vojvodina region of Serbia. "Many of them were recently released," he was quoted as saying.

The colonel said in the interview that it was true there were some corpses at Ovcara, but they were the bodies of people found dead in the streets of Vukovar.

A Montenegro acquaintance of the colonel who spoke to him recently said the colonel felt bitter toward his military superiors.

He repeated the defence he gave in 1992, the acquaintance said, claiming that the hospital patients, a mixed group of civilians and soldiers, were taken to Vojvodina.

"He feels betrayed and manipulated by his superiors, especially Gen Mrksic, with whom he had arguments in Vukovar," the acquaintance said. — New York Times.

Nato force helped by militias to clear mines

David Fairhall
Defence Correspondent

THE first casualties in the Nato-led peace implementation force in Bosnia area, — as military planners feared — the victims of landmines.

Two British soldiers were injured at Samski Most last month, and an American seriously injured when his vehicle detonated a mine near the River Sava.

Last week two British soldiers were injured in the Sarajevo suburbs.

Between 4 million and 6 million mines have been laid throughout former Yugoslavia since the war began, and as the troops spread out across unfamiliar mountainous terrain blanketed in snow, American commanders in particular believe this is the most serious threat they face.

The problem is far too big for even the 60,000-strong implementation force (I-FOR) to tackle alone. It is relying on local militias who scattered the mines and booby traps to do their own clearance.

I-FOR will take responsibility only for clearing the main routes its patrols intend to use. Nevertheless it is making strenuous efforts to map the hundreds of known minefields and provide technical assistance where possible.

The Dayton accord requires the militias to provide information on their minefields within seven days of Nato taking over from the United Nations — a commitment largely fulfilled — and to clear a 4km-wide separation zone along the new internal boundaries within a month.

According to Major Martin Andrews, formerly with the UN's mine action group and now handling the same problem in the I-FOR headquarters at Kiseljak, the militias' response has been positive.

"The BiH (the mainly Muslim Bosnian army) have been bending over backwards to help. They have produced 800 sets of minefield records and a map," he said.

"VRS (Bosnian Serb militia) have not been so quick to respond, by all accounts, but we believe they do now understand the urgency and are ready to co-operate."

"In the British sector [which includes a lot of territory controlled by the Croatian HVO militia] the multinational division have received 80 per cent of the information they were expecting."

Without accurate maps and records, Maj Andrews emphasises, mine clearance is virtually impossible. The alternative is a painstaking manual search with a prodder, without any guarantee of complete clearance.

"If the separation zone had to be prodded from end to end it would take 27 years."

Cypriot police 'involved in underworld murders'

Chris Drake in Nicosia

CYPRIOI police officers have been accused by the island's president of murder, bombings, arson attacks, and being deeply involved in underworld battles for the control of drugs, prostitution and gambling.

In an astonishing public announcement which shocked the country, Glafkos Clerides claimed that some of the killings were carried out with the full knowledge of senior officers and that police involvement in underworld corruption reached the force's highest levels.

The island's boast of a low crime rate is a standard part of its advertising to attract tourists. Close to a million Britons taking their holidays

here each year. It is also home to two British bases with 10,000 servicemen and their families, and the regional headquarters of hundreds of international companies.

This image of a peaceful holiday haven has been seriously damaged recently by a series of gangland-style attacks. Nightclub owners have been killed, cars blown up and flats, clubs and massage parlours set on fire. Very few of the crimes, including eight murders, have been solved, despite police assurances that everything was being done to track down those responsible.

Now President Clerides claims that the police are unable to make arrests because they themselves are to blame. His allegations were made

in a letter accepting the resignation of the assistant police chief, Costas Papacostas, which revealed that he was considering sacking him. The police chief, Andreas Potamitis, is on leave abroad due to ill-health but is expected to resign too.

The president writes: "My concerns had increased after unquestionably reliable information that murders had been committed by police officers. In one case police visited a senior officer at two in the morning and told him of the murder they had committed. The officer told them: I know

everything. Be careful". In another incident, a senior officer tipped off a suspect that the police were due to search his home for guns.

The force's reputation was already badly tarnished by revelations in November that officers in the seaside resort

Officers used methods reminiscent of the Inquisition to extract confessions

of Limassol had tortured suspects in a manner "reminiscent of the Middle Ages and the Inquisition".

A suspect would be handcuffed and his legs tied together with a rope which would then be attached to a chain hooked to a pulley in the police station ceiling.

"The detainee would be raised upside down, his legs pointing towards the ceiling and his head hanging down between six inches and a foot from the floor. His head would be covered with a hood and [then placed in] a tin can or a bucket."

Electric batons, clubs, rods or fists were used to beat the prisoner "with particular emphasis paid to his genitals and the soles of his feet."

This brutal abuse, the torturer would bring him round by throwing water on his face and then "beat again".

The government has said that torture victims are entitled to compensation. Work has started on how much should be paid out.

Twelve officers, including some senior men, face dismissal following the inquiry. British tourists have been beaten by police officers to extract confessions after being arrested for minor drugs and other offences. Some women have complained of threats of sexual abuse.

Last summer the British High Commission told the Cypriot foreign ministry that it wanted arrested Britons treated better, and to be told when they were held.

صحنه من الاجل

The Algerian election has turned the rebels against themselves, David Hirst reports from Beirut

Islam insurgents in crisis

ALGERIA'S Islamic insurgency, which once posed a challenge to the army-backed regime, is sliding into a debilitating, perhaps disastrous, internal conflict.

The struggle for ascendancy between its extremists and its relative moderates, always latent, took a more dramatic and murderous form after November's presidential elections, and the popular, if provisional, mandate they conferred on President Lezine Zeroual to end the civil war in the way he sees fit.

Scores of insurgents are now dying, both in clashes among themselves and in the war on the regime. Fanatics of the *Groupes Islamistes Armés* have sought to step up the war in peculiarly shocking forms. But as they do so, the Islamic Salvation Front

(FIS), or part of its confused leadership, has grown readier to condemn atrocities which bring the Islamist movement into disrepute, and many members of its militia, the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS), have deserted.

Last week Small Belligazem, mayor of Djelida, west of Algiers, was found on the roadside, his heart and liver torn from his dismembered body. It was the latest of the post-election GIA atrocities whose many victims have included the journalist Hamid Mahlouf — his daughter discovered his head on a pike — two high-ranking army officers and two Levantine sailors.

The GIA failed to disrupt the elections as they had vowed to do. The atrocities seem to be an attempt to prove that they are still very much there, still able to strike at the regime, intimidate the

people, and deter insurgents who, sensing their growing isolation, are tempted to respond to official offers of "mercy" if they "repent".

Mustafa Kartali, a high-ranking FIS member, was reported to have turned himself in yesterday. In an attempt to stop the rot, the GIA have even issued a fatwa against watching television, because it broadcasts interviews with "penitents".

The selective, wankingly gruesome assassinations, mostly in Algiers or nearby, achieve maximum publicity with minimum resources. That is one reason why the GIA chose them. Another, observers suggest, is that, as they are losing ground militarily as well as politically, they are becoming less able to mount conventional operations.

Last month brought the resumption of a vicious form of random terror: a car-bomb, exploding outside a cafe, which killed 15 and wounded 40. In the past FIS leaders voiced disapproval of such blind violence, although usually hedging it with equivocation. This time Rabah Kabir, the FIS spokesman in Germany, condemned "this criminal act".

It was "impossible to solve political problems, of any kind, by crimes against humanity", he said.

The only way was "national reconciliation", achieved through a "pledge from all, both regime and opposition, to reject violence as a way of keeping power or seeking it".

The condemnation came after signs that he and like-minded FIS leaders interpreted the elections as meaning that Algerians craved peace, and that if they did not

take that into account their standing would suffer. In an "open letter" to President Zeroual, Mr Kabir acknowledged the "popular support" he had won.

Such conciliatory gestures have been denounced, not only by the GIA but also — in a sign of confusion in the whole Islamist camp — by rival FIS leaders such as the US-based Anwar Haddem, who called Mr Kabir's letter "treason".

It is a time for agonising reappraisals and basic choices. The moderates can have no more illusions about their ability to rein in the extremists. It recently emerged that two FIS "sheikhs" who had tried to do just that were murdered.

Muhammad Said and Abdul Razzaq al-Rejjam went over to the GIA in 1994, believing that they could "correct" the ex-

Jonathan Freedland in Washington

HILLARY CLINTON came under sustained political onslaught last night, including fresh allegations that she lied under oath about the Whitewater affair, concealed her role in a bungled purge of White House staff and is a tyrannical boss.

As Mrs Clinton began a tour to promote a book on child-raising, Republicans were casting her as a deceptive manipulator at the centre of a series of White House scandals.

Yesterday's influential political television talk-shows all led on the charge against Mrs Clinton, asking a revised version of the Watergate question: "What did the First Lady know and when did she know it?"

The storm was ignited by a rush of previously-unreleased documents which appear to contradict Mrs Clinton's earlier testimony on Whitewater. Republicans said yesterday they might call Mrs Clinton before the senate committee investigating the affair.

The committee chairman, Senator Al D'Amato, said the new material suggested "conduct that borders on contempt, obstruction of justice and making false statements".

Equally damaging could be the release of a memo by the former White House aide David Watkins claiming that Mrs Clinton was involved in Travelgate — the shambolic firing of the White House travel office staff in 1993.

The administration is accused of dismissing the staff on trumped-up charges in order to make room for several Arkansas cronies, headed by a cousin of the president's. Mrs Clinton has always denied any role in the fiasco.

An associate of Mrs Clinton told the New York Times yesterday: "She's a good screamer. She can cut someone to ribbons and make them feel like an idiot. It was a lot easier to do what she wanted."

Asked whether she ordered the travel office dismissal, Mrs Clinton told *Newsweek* published yesterday: "I just don't have any memory of that."

The magazine's cover places her above the headline *Saint or Sinner?*

Initially promoted by her husband as a "co-president", Mrs Clinton quickly provoked a backlash by her highly-visible policymaking powers.

When the president's flagship reform of the health care system piloted by his wife sank in 1994, she retreated to the more traditional first



Mrs Clinton: 'At centre of White House scandals'

lady duties: opening hospitals, visiting Third World countries and working with children.

Now she has returned to the political limelight — but not by choice.

At issue are billing records from the Castle Grande land project, even though she claimed in her statement that she knew nothing about the venture. The conversations were with an executive of Madison Guaranty, the failed finance house whose owner was a partner of the Clintons in the Whitewater land deal.

Republicans, who have been demanding the documents for two years, expressed disbelief at White House claims that the papers turned up by chance in the Clinton's private residence on Thursday night. Mr D'Amato called the discovery "miraculous", and leading Republicans said that it was part of a complex cover-up.

In her new book, *It Takes a Village*, Mrs Clinton shows herself to be a much more conservative figure than the one demonised by the US radical right. She calls for a return to school uniforms and sexual abstinence by young people.

She also speaks about the trouble she had becoming pregnant, her problems breastfeeding, and the rockiness of her marriage. She writes that she opted to "bite her tongue" several times rather than consider divorce and chose "to think instead about what I could do to be a better wife and partner".

"My husband has done the same," she adds.

Strike honours Hamas bomber

Derek Brown in Jerusalem and Jessica Berry in Gaza City

PALESTINIANS mourned the man they called the Engineer yesterday. In the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, shops and businesses closed, and the streets were eerily quiet.

The overwhelming response to a strike call by the minority Islamist movement Hamas reflected the Palestinians' outrage at the assassination on Friday of Yahya Ayyash, who was held responsible by Israel for scores of deaths in suicide bombings.

Ayyash was killed instantly by a 2oz explosive device concealed in a mobile telephone. Israel has not troubled to contradict the universal assumption that its agents were responsible.

In Ayyash's home village of Rafat, near Ramallah in the West Bank, friends and relatives flocked to offer their condolences yesterday.

The family home, a two-storey farmhouse draped with a green Hamas flag overlooking olive groves, was thronged with people. In the tradition of Arab mourning, 50 or 60 clan members sat mute, occasionally greeting their visitors.

Ayyash's parents were still in Gaza, where their son was buried on Saturday in an extraordinary mass display of anger and grief.

A vast tide of Gazan men — women do not attend Islamic funerals — followed the coffin's chaotic progress to the Martyrs' Cemetery on the outskirts of Gaza City.

As they surged through the streets, they chanted tributes to Ayyash, and vows of revenge. Some were directed at the Israeli prime minister, Shimon Peres. Others called for an all-out war on the Jewish state, and for more bomb attacks of the kind Ayyash specialised in.

"Peres, prepare your coffin. Ayyash's ghost will appear before you!" they yelled. And: "We want buses, we want cars!"

In three years Ayyash planned and equipped a series of suicide bomb missions, many directed against crowded Israeli buses.

Hamas leaflets were passed around in the crowd on Saturday. They promised, in blood-curdling terms, that he would be avenged.

"The assassination of martyred leader Yahya Ayyash is part of the battle with the Zionist entity. Hamas makes an oath with God to proceed with its programme of holy war and resistance," said the printed single sheet.

Last month Hamas signed a mutual non-aggression pact with the Palestine Liberation Organisation, which runs the Palestinian Authority in the self-rule areas. It agreed to hand over weapons, and not to launch attacks on Israeli targets from territory controlled by the PLO.

That agreement is in danger of collapse. A local Hamas leader, Mahmoud Zahhar, said that when he next met the PLO chief, Yasser Arafat, he would ask for the return of Hamas guns. "We are not going to give the Israelis a chance to divide Palestinian unity," he said during the funeral. "Israel will not stop at-

'Peres, prepare your coffin, Ayyash's ghost will appear before you'

lacking Hamas, except if they understand it will cost a high price."

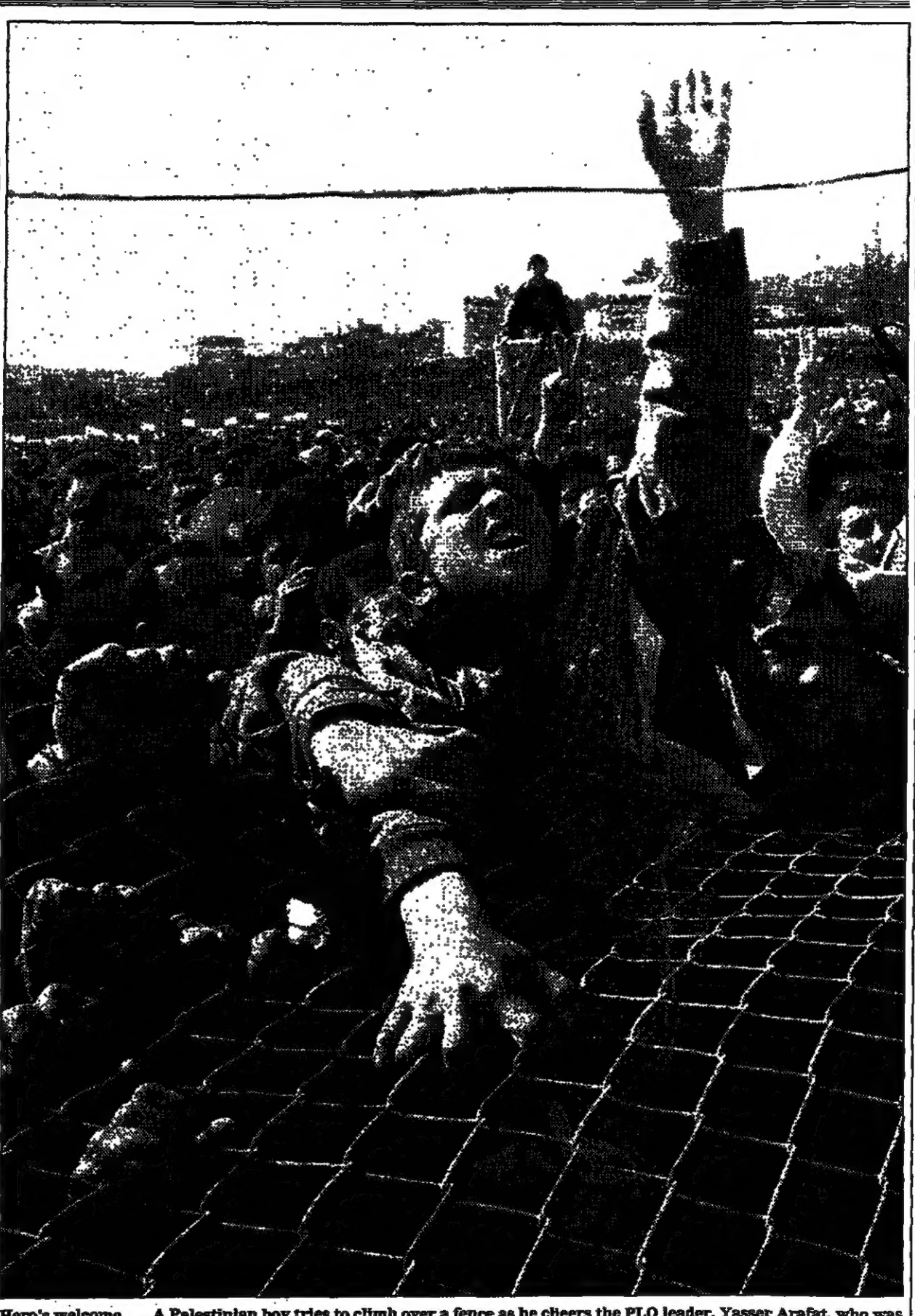
Although Mr Zahhar was anxious to play down tension between Hamas and the PLO, there were many in the crowd whose hatred of Israel was matched only by their contempt for the self-rule authority.

Palestinians are outraged that Israeli intelligence was apparently able to operate with impunity in Gaza. The assassination could not have been worse timed for the Palestinian Authority, coming less than two weeks before the elections which it hopes will legitimise its shaky rule.

Mr Arafat's "sabine" met in Gaza yesterday and condemned the killing, saying it had "poisoned the prevailing political climate". They warned: "Violence will inevitably lead to more violence."

Although it appeared last month to be close to a deal with the PLO, Hamas is boycotting the elections. But several leading personalities are running as independents. Their support could be boosted by the assassination.

Obituary, page 10



Hero's welcome... A Palestinian boy tries to climb over a fence as he cheers the PLO leader, Yasser Arafat, who was making his first visit to the West Bank town of Dura yesterday. Mr Arafat told a crowd of about 400 that the killing of Yahya Ayyash violated the spirit of reconciliation

Vietnam's talent runs to waste in home-grown brain drain

The educated are trading professions for money, writes Tim Larimer in Hanoi

AFTER the fall of Saigon and the end of the Vietnam war in 1975, thousands of Vietnamese fled, including many scientists, doctors and engineers.

Twenty years later another kind of brain drain, this one internal, is bleeding universities, hospitals and ministries of talent.

This time the educated are not leaving Vietnam. They are abandoning their professions for jobs that pay more but make no use of their advanced educations.

"It is my dream to work as a doctor, but the pay is too small and the conditions are not good," said Cao Minh Tuan, aged 35, who traded in his stethoscope to sell television sets. "Now I make enough money to buy two houses. On a doctor's salary, I could never do that."

him wealthy. Many others like him are discovering that the introduction of a market economy into communist Vietnam means there is more money to be made in the private sector. But privatisation does not mean they can automatically shift from the government payroll to better-paying positions.

There are no private hospitals or clinics yet, for example, and the idea of private medical practice has not caught on. Many doctors find secondary sources of income: selling medicine is among the more popular.

But the professions that once commanded stable government wages, subsidised housing and lifetime security — teaching, engineering, medicine — have yet to benefit from economic reforms.

The real opportunities for getting rich are in tourism, property, trade and with for-

ign companies. At the same time, government ministries, schools and hospitals are cutting jobs.

So people with degrees are taking jobs that have little to do with their education. Hotel receptionists usually have degrees. Taxi drivers often do, too. Waiters are likely to turn out to be like one middle-aged man, who was trained as a chemist but now cannot find work in his field.

A man in his late 30s with an advanced physics degree works as a tourist guide and English translator. "What kind of work is there for a physicist?" he asked.

A recently qualified doctor washes cars for a living, making more money than in a hospital. A schoolteacher works as a hotel doorman. A geography professor has made a small fortune in property and has opened a beer hall. Rural doctors work as bricklayers.

"We are in kind of a transition period," said Nguyen Thanh Ha, who has studied the brain drain for the gov-

ernment. "The labour market is not yet functioning well. If things are not corrected soon, we are likely to have serious problems."

The national assembly was warned last year that the brain drain could impede economic development by wasting its educated on menial jobs or losing them to foreign companies.

An official urged the government to invest more in research to keep scientists interested in working for universities.

But Mr Ha complained that efforts to halt the brain drain have been cosmetic and ineffectual. The government, for example, has begun giving awards to students who excel in technological studies.

But Mr Ha said: "Someone from the foreign-language college with even average knowledge can earn \$200 a month working for a foreign company. But if you are an engineer, you are lucky to get \$40, even if you have a hundred of those awards." — New York Times.

News in brief

Seven killed in bus blast

Seven people were killed and 16 injured when a bomb exploded on a bus yesterday in riot-torn Karachi, southern Pakistan.

Forced landings

The US military has helped Peru and Colombia shoot or force down nearly 40 civilian planes carrying illegal drugs to the United States, military officials said. — Washington Post.

Lottery record

The Chinese bought a record 5.5 billion yuan (\$427 million) in lottery tickets last year and sales could double if supply could meet demand, *Business Weekly* reported. — AP.

Chechenia toll

A Russian official confirmed estimates by experts that 20,000 to 30,000 people have died during the 13-month war in Chechenia. — AP.

Japan's PM

Japan's ruling coalition agreed on a new policy platform yesterday, paving the way for the trade minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, to be named prime minister later in the week, the *Kyodo* news agency reported. — Reuters.

First aid victim

A 72-year-old motorist was run over and killed north of Amsterdam at the weekend after he stopped on a motorway to give first aid to a rabbit, the Dutch news agency ANP reported. — Reuters.

Colombia killings

Leaving rebels killed at least eight soldiers in an attack in northern Colombia, military sources said. The soldiers were guarding a communications station belonging to Ecopetrol. — Reuters.

Hirsute ruling

Leaders of the rebel Taliban faction in southern Afghanistan say that unless men grow beards in line with strict Islamic practices they will not be allowed to work, except as street sweepers, a Pakistani newspaper, *The News*, reported. — AP.

'Willy' sets off on a trip to freedom

Henry Tricks sees an ailing whale with a glittering past leave his humble home in Mexico City

KEIKO, the three-ton killer whale that leapt to stardom in the film *Free Willy*, left his cramped pool in Mexico City yesterday to fly to Oregon and possible freedom.

Winched up by crane from a tank he has long outgrown, the 21ft whale — which for 11 years has been the star performer in a Mexico City amusement park — began a journey that could make him the first killer whale to be returned to the ocean.

His immediate destination is a purpose-built aquarium in Newport, Oregon.

Involving nine hours in a Hercules transport plane, the trip is a far cry from the dash to freedom "Willy" made with the help of a 12-year-old boy in the 1993 Warner Brothers movie.

Hoisted up in a canvas sling, squealing and flapping his fins as he dangled 30-foot in the air, Keiko was lowered into a metal railway container.

Rows of Mexican families braved the midnight chill to see him depart on a flat-bed truck.

Children yelled "Adios Keiko" and some shed tears as the convoy, led by motorcycle police, took the whale away.

Underweight, with warts on his skin and a dorsal fin that droops limply over, Keiko will be nursed back to health in a cold salt-water pool in Newport five times the size of his Mexican habitat.

His days as a performer are over, the organisers of the move say.

They hope they can prepare him for a return to the wild so that he can eventually roam the coast of Iceland and find a mate.

At 15 years of age, Keiko has reached sexual maturity, and officials at the Mexican amusement park said they were donating him to the new aquarium because they were unable to afford a female companion for him.

United Parcel Service of America gave him a free \$200,000 flight, and a Mexican crane company took him to the airport, its name painted all over the tank.

The Free Willy Foundation, a US charity which campaigned for the move, says Keiko is the star in a television giant, Televisa, has built a soap opera around his departure and plans to continue filming in Oregon.

For the amusement park there was little consolation in the loss of its greatest crowd-puller. It has ruled out acquiring another killer whale, saying there are none on the market.

The children had other ideas. "Send us back your child," yelled one 10-year-old, Adriana Paula Barera, as Keiko's truck pulled off. — Reuters.

North Korea on the bread line

History requires that we help

THE NEWS that more than 20 million North Koreans are going hungry has not yet greatly moved the rest of the world. It is time it did. Korea remains a far-off country both geographically and because of its political isolation. It has almost no friends. But there are good practical reasons for helping Pyongyang quite apart from the moral obligation to save millions of children from malnutrition or worse.

The excuse that too little is known about what is really going on in North Korea — and therefore that the dimensions of the present crisis cannot be properly gauged by potential donors — no longer holds. With growing realism, no doubt spurred by desperation, Pyongyang officials have allowed UN agencies exceptional access to rural areas which are normally closed. Quantities of data have been provided and old Pyongyang hands are amazed by the speed with which enquiries are now often answered. The food problem goes far beyond the immediate effects of the floods. The picture is one of a country which has been brought to the verge of exhaustion over the past few years, and where another bad year could tip it over the edge. Mismanagement has played a part, but a significant factor has been the loss of Chinese and (former) Soviet support for a country whose agriculture depends heavily on inputs of fertiliser and fuel.

Some will argue that the Kim Il-sung dynasty, now continued by his secretive son Kim Jong-il, deserves to collapse. Yet even (perhaps one should say especially) in Seoul, it is realised that this would be a disaster for the whole Korean peninsula and perhaps beyond. The disparity between North and South is too great: the flight of refugees southwards would be overwhelming. Surrounded by three great powers (Russia, China and Japan) the destabilisation of Korea would create new competition and insecurity in East Asia.

Pyongyang's defecation of the Kim dynasty over many decades has not only lost friends but consumed vast amounts of scarce resources. There is no doubt that it has warped decision-making and paralysed initiatives among officials who must prove they are loyal before all else. But the mood of adulation has waned. The younger Kim, though reclusive, appears to lead a reform-minded stratum in the Workers' Party which favours opening to the outside world against the opposition of army hardliners from the old generation. Some Pyongyang officials hint quite broadly that they are struggling for more sensible and flexible policies.

South Korea has taken the lead, for obvious reasons, in cultivating the image of an unpredictable Pyongyang. Understanding the North is not really so hard and visitors to both countries notice similarities in their political cultures. Seoul has recently argued that the North's "military threat" is increasing — a view uncritically echoed last week by Michael Portillo. Yet a military adventure seems wholly implausible for this exhausted country.

The World Food Programme has been struggling to secure enough aid. The problem is not just to compensate for the flood damage, but to fill what is now a chronic deficit. Already food rations have been cut — as we report today — to minimum levels but even these are not being fully met. It is a desperate situation. Only a handful of countries have answered the WFP appeal and Britain is one of many still considering its response. A joint effort is needed to tackle North Korea's crisis. History should remind us that it is not such a distant place.

Lottery lunacy

But would we do good works without it?

IMPERFECT though it is, it is impossible not to be impressed by the National Lottery as a country-wide participatory event. Camelot reckon that a staggering 90 per cent of the population bought at least one ticket for a pool that generated £81.4 million in prize money. What other activity has ever generated such a response? It is a far bigger turn-out than a general election. It has become a national talking, and even bonding, event. The notoriously reticent British are talking to each other in the queues these days because of the lottery. And it is not just down to greed. Well, not completely. The fact that a chunk of the winnings (a record £39 million last week) goes to help worthy causes is one of the complex reasons why people choose to waste their money this way. This column is not the place for financial advice, but there is no doubt that investment in premium bonds is a much more cost-effective way of entering a lottery. You can win prizes of £1 million without losing your stake. (Perhaps it needs its own television programme to promote it.) But the point is that people choose the lottery because it gives them the chance, however distant, of being able to win sums big enough to enable them to stop working, while not having the social stigma attached to other ways of getting rich quick. It has its excesses (like poorer people gambling money they can't afford) which ought to be addressed, but the lottery is undoubtedly a democratic occasion in which people voluntarily place their money knowing that only a few will hit the jackpot. No one can say they weren't warned.

At the moment it is also providing a valuable underpinning for consumer spending. In the year to the third quarter of 1995 it has boosted consumer spending by 0.5 per cent from 2.1 per cent to 2.6 per cent and, unlike most consumption, it is being spent on a British product with much of the proceeds going towards enriching the social and architectural infrastructure of the country. Is it too much to hope that this inner spirit of the lottery could be sublimated into a greater willingness to pay tax directly for such worthy causes? John Major claimed yesterday that "the degree of money that is necessary for these good causes would never have come from the taxpayer". What he really means is not while the Conservatives are still in power. It is quite likely that if the Government had decided to set up a special fund, financed by taxes, equivalent to that which good causes currently receive from the lottery, it would have been politically popular. It would have generated a constant supply of "feel-good" stories as communities up and down the country benefited from the awards decided by the same committees that are now handing out money to charities, sport, the arts, heritage and the millennium. But, on the basis of the euphoria generated last week, one would be forced to admit that it would have been a lot less fun.



Letters to the Editor

A disservice to the world

WHERE and when did your leader write (December 29) hear the BBC World Service? I found it very different when working in the construction industry for three years in Germany. At best, half the output was a discordant noise called "pop", presented by ex-Radio 1 disc jockeys in pseudo-American accents. Most of the rest was comprised of talks given by women or plays, usually with some feminist theme. Eastern and Western Europe were mainly ignored in favour of Africa.

Eventually, I only listened to Sunday morning programmes, hoping to hear news about Britain, although there was little of that. Only three East Germans I met had listened to the WS, before or since the political change, but most had heard RIAS (Radio In American Sector). One of the exceptions was a doctor of finance, employed by the Stasi, who used it for the BBC Learning English series. He wanted to cultivate the British rather than the more common and fashionable American accent.

The BBC World Service does not "foster a climate for British culture, translatable into political harmony or exports". Indeed, it is more likely to be counter-productive. There is a strong case for axing it altogether, and saving £170 to £200 million a year for the taxpayers. That would be more sensible than a lot of government actions during the last 17 years.

A B G Hammer, 9 York Street, Haregate, N Yorks.

Poor Marx

LET'S hope that Militant has a surer grip on Marxist theory than it does on historical fact as evidenced by Mike Waddington's curious statement (Letters, January 5) that the Liberal high-water mark of 1906 was followed by a "swift decline which he sees as the fate of a future Labour government. The 1906 government was, with the post-war Labour government, the most progressive this century. It introduced progressive income tax, Labour exchanges, unemployment insurance, and old-age pensions. Terry Philpot, Oxted, Surrey RH8 0NP.

I have no idea whether or not Dr Mohammed al-Mas'ari is a good man, if he will meet Ann Widdecombe in heaven or if he will be satisfied with a company of poor sinners. And I have no more sympathy for Islamic fundamentalism — the offence of which Dr Mas'ari is accused by some of his critics — than I have for Islamic feudalism. The un-

Trading up for al-Mas'ari

THE al-Mas'ari debate seems to be polarised between the moral and the pragmatic — human rights versus jobs. This is a false distinction. Dr al-Mas'ari deserves the support of those who have an interest in sustaining employment in the engineering industry, of which the defence sector is still a major component.

As a trade union official, I dealt with defence companies for over 20 years. I saw them transformed from being confident, growing and technologically advanced to worried, redundancy-prone and highly critical of government defence policy. If the present situation continues, there will be absolutely no job security for those whose careers have been devoted to organisations that have become over-dependent on military production.

British Aerospace is 64 per cent defence-dependent; the

company with the highest proportion in Japan is Kawasaki — but at only 16 per cent. The largest German defence company, Daimler-Benz, is 30 per cent dependent. The cold war confrontation is over and there is a glut of arms on the world market with too many producers chasing fewer and poorer buyers.

The Challenger 2 tank was developed for the Shah of Iran by Vickers as part of the UK Government's support for his unpopular regime. When he was deposed, one of the first actions taken by the new rulers was to cancel the order. Redundancies followed immediately. The future of British industry, and employment, does not lie in placating a corrupt ruling family but in producing alternative products that people want to buy.

Tim Webb, Bourverie Road, London N16 0AD.

Why the end of waiting lists may not be good news for the NHS

WHEN I read Mike Marchment of the West Midlands Health Authority, saying that "there is no reason why there should be waiting lists in the NHS by the year 2000" (January 5) my heart does not leap with joy. To assume that reduction in, or abolition of, waiting lists is universally desirable flies in the face of clinical practice and knowledge.

Whilst no one would argue that it is unacceptable for some cases to be kept waiting because patients are suffering an arbitrary time limit is a very crude measure for a very complex healthcare system. There are many reasons why waiting lists may get smaller, and not reflect increased productivity of the NHS.

Factors which influence whether you are placed on a waiting list include whether you go to your GP, whether your GP decides to refer you to a specialist, and what treatment the specialist recommends. All of these are influenced by patient expectations, clinical standards, and availability of services.

Reaching a situation of no waiting lists could merely reflect unavailability of services and loss of faith in the NHS. If the currency now being used was one of relative health benefit then I would be less anxious about the focus on time limits for acute hospital-based activity over the demands of community care, the needs of mentally ill people and the desirability of future investments to promote health amongst our young people.

Being driven merely by time limits, without any regard for whether waiting lists are for knee replacements or cosmetic surgery, what treatments are excluded, or how patients have been involved, does not convince me that the balance of health needs of all groups have been considered.

Until patients, clinicians, health service managers, public and politicians have had a fuller debate of what health services are needed, I remain unconvinced that to focus on waiting lists is to benefit the health of the population or to ensure the most appropriate direction for the NHS.

Dr Stan Griffiths, 30 Lockford Road, Oxford, OX2 5EY.



Streetwise tips from fun city

I AM so glad that Deborah Orr's "warm, comfy, hassle-free life" (First Person, January 4) was undisturbed by the riot in Brixton. Her self-deprecation and attempts at irony only thinly disguise a shameful lack of understanding or empathy for her own neighbourhood. I'd like to see her tell those single mothers on the Loughborough estate how much of a "fun place to hang out" Brixton is.

There is no shortage of material to fuel misconceptions about the area. For example, while Orr was drunk in Soho, an opportunistic mob was performing a well-rehearsed farce outside Brixton police station. Not the rioters — they were already making off with their mostly unattended possessions — but self-appointed "spokespeople" eagerly feeding a poorly-informed press. The riot was provoked and

carried out by those who, to the continuing detriment of Brixton and its residents, choose to live up to stereotypes.

If, in the aftermath, even the commentary of a journalist who lives in Brixton does nothing but reinforce these stereotypes, then perhaps it's time for her to move somewhere else that's handy for the West End. Mark Solomons, Brixton Hill, London SW2 1QY.

Letters to the Editor may be faxed on 0171 837 4530 or sent by post to 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER, and by e-mail to letters@guardian.co.uk. Please include a full postal address and daytime telephone number, even in e-mailed letters. We regret we cannot acknowledge receipt of letters. We may edit them for clarity and concision.

Life and times

A WOMAN is diagnosed as A (warding the grim reaper, January 6). When transferred to the mortuary, she is found still to be living and medical services hasten to find out what's wrong with her. Shouldn't they be finding out what's wrong with the doctor? Jim Golcher, 5 Blakesley Hill, Greens Norton, Twickenham, NN12 8BP.

A few hardy souls sat out our ward meeting last night in a cheerless hall. Hugo Young's new vision of a landslide Labour victory (January 4) felt a somewhat distant and rather impossible one. It ain't going to be that easy unless you let alone the marginals or deepest south. Canon David Partridge, The Rectory, Emsworth, Hants PO10 7DP.

DESPITE all the fuss about the ban coaches in the fast lane, the National Express winter timetable does not show any alterations to journey times. Am I to conclude that this ban will not have a material effect or should my local library transfer the document to Fiction? Colin Chapman, 21 Manor Close, Burgess, Hincley, Leics LE10 2NL.

A Country Diary

THE LAKE DISTRICT: Only the winter mountaineer knows the lovely sound of boots crunching on sunlit snow that merrily squeaks with every step. We didn't reach the high fells during the wonderful last week of the year, but every day were out in the snow on local hills — Scout Scar, Whitbarrow, Farleton Knott and others — which all gave us superb panoramas of sunlit, snow-covered fells crowding the horizon. Meanwhile, my son and daughter-in-law, with their ice-axes, were daily treading Catstycum, St Sunday Crag, Ullscarf and other heights, so we gleaned a fair picture of the Lakeland scene at the turn of the year. It was a week of daily cloudless skies, little or no wind, even on the high tops, and unbroken sunshine from dawn to dusk.

Although skiing and ice-climbing were possible, if you knew where to go, there was not quite enough snow for the enthusiast, but the clarity of the views was quite exceptional. My son saw few people on the high fells — nobody on

some — and we had our little hills almost to ourselves. Little vignettes will sustain us during dark days to come. There was the great, wedge-shaped skein of geese, black against the sunset, making for the Kent estuary and, somewhere over Lewes and, unaccountably making a sharp 30 degrees turn to the right. Then, on Boxing Day, from the limestone cliffs of Scout Scar, I watched for a quarter of an hour a manned balloon desperately trying to make height along the wooded Lyth valley on this most windless of days. When I left in the gathering dusk, it was still limply crawling over hedges; I never learned its fate. And then, on New Year's Eve, perched on a bank of limestone on the top of Farleton Knott, with snowbound Ingleborough beckoning to the east, we were joined by a friendly robin, who enjoyed a crumbed piece of mince pie while, three feet away, we drank our soup and munched the last of the turkey sandwiches.

A HARRY GRIFFIN

When shame is the name of the game

Endpiece

Roy Hattersley

HAVE waited all weekend to hear the sound of Michael Portillo's imperial echoes, and I have waited in vain — struggling to combat my impatience with attempts to imagine how Lord Palmerston would have reacted to a foreign government that complained about the lawful conduct of a legal resident within this septred isle. So much for sovereignty if, on the say so of Saudi Arabia, the Home Secretary attempts to deport a middle-aged Arab for the sin of sending inflammatory faxes to Riyadh.

I have no idea whether or not Dr Mohammed al-Mas'ari is a good man, if he will meet Ann Widdecombe in heaven or if he will be satisfied with a company of poor sinners. And I have no more sympathy for Islamic fundamentalism — the offence of which Dr Mas'ari is accused by some of his critics — than I have for Islamic feudalism. The un-

doubted misdemeanour of the Saudi government. But the willingness to defend the rights of people with whom we disagree is the mark of a civilised society. The test of a nation's self-confidence is the way in which it stands up to blackmail. Strange that Mr Portillo — so proud of the independence which he pledged to protect — is silent in the face of Saudi interference in our domestic affairs.

The principal complaint against the decision to deport Dr Mas'ari is, of course, the Government's denial of the right to asylum. And we can take it for granted that any policy which is out of Ann Widdecombe by Michael Howard is likely to be shamelessly repressive.

Indeed, Ms Widdecombe's defence of the deportation extended moral insensitivity to new extremes. "We have close trade relations with a friendly state who have been the subject of constant criticism from Dr al-Mas'ari. We have enormous export considerations and British job considerations..." Honest, that is what she said, difficult though it may be for people with humane in-

stricts and a grasp of English grammar to believe. It is for the judges to decide if the principle that she set out is a justification for a deportation order as laid down by the Act. But there is just a chance that she, and people like her, will be moved by the discovery that their behaviour has damaged Britain's reputation. It has made us look pathetic.

It is the feeble nature of our response to Saudi pressure which should have incited Michael Portillo into making one of his sub-Churchillian speeches. The Secretary of State for Defence was prepared to fight them on the beaches rather than allow Brussels to decide the design of military cap badges — a danger sufficiently remote to be resisted without much personal risk. But when the Saudis threatened that, unless we pander to their prejudices, we may lose the chance to export arms, he accepted the instruction without a murmur.

On the day the Government's decision was revealed by this newspaper, I happened to be in Canterbury Cathedral, where I paused outside the chapel which is dedicated to

the East Kent Regiment. Looking at the tattered regimental colours, I recalled, for the first time in 50 years, a line from a terrible poem which I had learned at school. The Private of The Buffs — captured by tribesmen in some distant land — was told to bow before a pagan god. Being a character in a Victorian poem, he refused. "Let dusky native whine and kneel/ An Englishman will die."

Strangely enough (for he does not often occupy my thoughts) I wondered if Mr Portillo was a genuine romantic chauvinist and, therefore, enjoyed such blasted rubbish. I now realise that — if he is familiar with the lines — he must regard them as a rebuke. He whined and knelt before a pagan god called Mammon. To sell his tanks and aeroplanes, he acquiesced in an intolerable interference in British business.

Another poem, which I had previously thought would appeal to Tory nationalists, ought to convince our splendid Cabinet that appeasement never works. Rudyard Kipling is, presumably, their poet laureate. His judgment on dane-

geld — the bad old Saxon habit of trying to buy-off enemies — is equally appropriate to Britain's willingness to fawn on so-called friends who threaten to cancel defence contracts.

The end of that game is oppression and shame, and the nation that plays it is lost. In the case of al Mas'ari, Britain is guilty of the oppression and is therefore shamed.

Until last week, I had supposed that the Saudis were so in our debt that they would overlook a few rude faxes from London. Did we not go to their defence when Iraq first occupied Kuwait, and then threatened Arabia itself? Cynics, I know, said that Desert Storm blew up in order to safeguard oil supplies and we always realised that the Gulf war was not fought in defence of freedom. Had it been otherwise, the democracies would have invaded, not defended, Saudi Arabia.

But I did believe that it was intended to prove that one sovereign state cannot bully another. We should have reminded King Fahd and Crown Prince Abdullah of that principle when they complained about the liberties

which British dissidents enjoy. Instead, we knuckled under and poor Ann Widdecombe was left to explain why. Just before Christmas she had told an Any Questions' audience that Her Majesty's Inspectors of Prisons refused to complete their examination of squalid Holloway because they were confident that government policy would soon bring an improvement to our custodial system. The day after the al-Mas'ari debacle, she appeared on television to draw a precise distinction between giving birth (which should be performed free of handcuffs, manacles and chains) and being in labour, which (she insisted) women prisoners must endure while shackled to beds or male wardens. And she has no doubt that we are right to deport the Saudi dissident.

This Government needs Ms Widdecombe. With its record on individual liberty, personal freedom and human dignity, it can only benefit from having, as its apologist, a woman of such conspicuous virtue that she made a public spectacle of her conversion from one Christian Church to another.

سكتا من الاميل

Rome Diary

John Hooper

DON'T know what sort of new year you had, but mine was pretty exciting. On December 31, I woke up to find I was the most hated man in Italy.

All the major daily papers had a reference to me and/or the Guardian on their front pages, together with abundant, hostile coverage inside. Il Messaggero thought what I had written was so unconscionable it set aside an entire page to deal with it. La Repubblica made it the target of its lead editorial. And, by the end of the day, it had been the subject of at least two national TV news items.

What stirred the Italian media to such a paroxysm of indignation was an item which even the most diligent Guardian reader might have overlooked: a six-line contribution to a page of predictions for 1996 speculating that a Mafia boss, one Pietro Aglieri, might be among the year's "movers and shakers".

Perhaps because Aglieri was the only Italian mentioned, it was assumed the Guardian had chosen him to represent Italy and that, in doing so, we were saying "Italy equals the Mafia". I have even been accused of naming him Italy's "Man of the Year".

All this may have a lot to say about the difficulty newspapers face in filling their pages in the news drought between Christmas and new year. But it also has something to say about Italy too. I have never known a country so morbidly preoccupied with the views of foreigners. A diplomat once told me it was the only EU state which protests through diplomatic channels to other EU states about what is perceived to be unfavourable media coverage.

Of that, Italians get a surfeit. Every day, overseas correspondents of the Italian news agency, ANSA, comb the foreign press for references to Italy which are then summarised and sent back for re-publication. The slant is routinely negative: someone, somewhere is getting at us. As was the case in the past week, the Times was said by one paper to have censured "chaos in Italy" (when it actually carried an innocuous leader on the current political uncertainty); Corriere della Sera reported that the Washington Post had made Genghis Khan "Man of the Millennium", but "left out Dante"; and RAI's radio news recorded that an international tasting had chosen the world's 10 greatest wines — "none of them Italian".

IT Baffles me how Italians manage to remain sanguine while being told, day in, day out, that they are reviled, despised and wilfully discriminated against by the rest of humanity. In part, I suspect this relentless negativity can be put down to a cultural idiosyncrasy. In public life at least, Italians often speak, and write, cryptically.

When I wrote that there was a disparity between the attention which Italian paid to the Pope and his teachings, it was re-interpreted as my calling them grand hypocrites. Who I noted that there was panic of first-hand reporting from Bosnia here and that it made the conflict seem disconcerting Italy's "moral indifference".

Not surprisingly, preachers tend to see it as straightforward to see it as straightforward and put it down to the Italian obsession with appearances as a national as well as individually. May Italians, though, will insist that it is really a symptom of low national self-esteem; that, behind Italy's glossy facade, there is a timorous nation, of fragile institutions, which still cannot believe in the reality of its success and prosperity. The two explanations are mutually exclusive.

Pilot error leaves Major up the creek

Commentary

Mark Lawson

THE publication of new biographies of Winston Churchill or Abraham Lincoln is always a difficult period for modern politicians, as reviewers are apt to become nostalgic on the subject of leaders. A particular target for sarcastic contrast is the level of verbal expression with which the giants of the past were apparently blessed.

Pity John Major and Tony Blair, then, who yesterday gave their first television interviews of 1996 on the very morning that the post books were drooling over a new Life of Lincoln, with particular reference to Abe's verbal grace. So, as we edge towards the election during which these leaders will be called upon to deliver their own Gettysburgs, how were they slapping up?

The Prime Minister made his annual January appearance on BBC1's Breakfast with Frost. It was a measure of his present difficulties that he chose to be interviewed live, such encounters are normally recorded, but last weekend's pre-packaged chat

for Radio 4's Today programme was rendered ludicrous by the oversight of Emma Nicholson. Appearing live, the PM had the benefit of a head-count of MPs just before he went on.

The least verbally competent prime minister since Alec Douglas-Home, Major managed to restrict himself on this occasion to one outright howler, which was at least interestingly Freudian. Pressed on his policy differences with the previous Tory prime minister, he replied: "Margaret Thatcher was my predecessor. There are large areas where we disagree. Some where people say we disagree. My spin-doctors will mutter that we know what he meant, to which we might reply that we also know what he was thinking."

Elsewhere, Major sounded normal, or normal for him, which is to say bizarre. Most parody of Major's speaking manner has fixed on a tendency towards tedious banter — "a not inconsiderable quantity" and so on — but the Frost appearance suggested that his essential linguistic quality is antiquity. He said "four four times". The electorate was directed towards "a set of economic circumstances that look more clement today than for some time."

The last time the word "clement" was in general political usage, it was the Labour prime minister's first name.

And, for 1996, the prime minister had a big new metaphor. The Tories had "weathered the storm" of a serious international recession and he could not believe that the electorate would wish "to throw away the pilots who've done that... and replace them with pilots who have no experience of even taking a dinghy on the Serpentine."

Now here is a line that Abraham Lincoln might have used: at least in its complete ignorance of 20th century transport developments. But for how many modern voters is the first association of the word "pilot" with boats? In shipping terminology, anyway, a pilot is someone who takes control of a boat only briefly in order to see it in or out of harbour: an odd, though perhaps revealing, picture of the premiership for Major to wish to promote.

It is this kind of bizarre slip of the tongue which has led some to suggest that Major is an extraterrestrial or a Nigerian (from which country he began his rise to power) who learned English from the novels of Trollope. The only other possible explanation is that the prime minister is drawn to river metaphors because constantly in his mind is the image of a well-known creek which he and his party are currently up.

Certainly, subconscious connections seem to be the best explanation for much of what Major says. Pressed on his 1990 vision of "classless society", he complained: "Many people look at a classless society through the

wrong end of the telescope." A quite meaningless phrase, but one which holds a shivery ghost of expressions to do with class division: wrong side of the tracks, wrong side of the blanket, wrong end of the queue. "It's about maintaining the rich tapestry of British life... some people try to see it as maintaining a blanket uniformity." It's common to complain about politicians using clichés, but Major at least groups his by theme, or here, seam: tapestries, blankets.

The interview gave a clear hint of Major's campaign tactics: a portrait of Blair as an opportunistic position-switcher: "He seems to be saying: Trust me, because I was wrong in the past and I no longer believe what I said in the past."

This strategy is a simple retreat of the anti-Kinnock

smears of four years ago. But Kinnock was vulnerable on this point because he had shown two conflicting public profiles: first as firebrand backbencher and then as reformist leader. For all the frantic Tory scrambling for dusty GND badges, Blair's rhetoric has been consistent during all the time that he has had a television presence.

Second, the British electorate is surely by now sophisticated enough to understand that an accusation that a rival possesses "merely soundbites" is itself a mere soundbite.

Over on Sky News, Tony Blair was giving his first in-

terview of the new year live from Singapore, where he was preparing to deliver the sequel to his speech last week in Tokyo. It says something for the media sickness of Blair's operation that his team have managed to turn what are really stopovers on his return from a Christmas holiday in Australia — very likely the two free stopovers permitted on most return flights to Oz — into a quasi state visit to the Far East.

Accused by Major of liking soundbites, Blair unveiled two: "One-nation Labour" and "the stakeholder economy." Revealingly, both were second sucks of things first on Conservative tongues. The first was at least a pointed and ironic borrowing of a Macleodism, but the second seemed merely a puffed and approving rewrite of Mrs Thatcher's phrase for privatisation: the "share-owning democracy."

Blair's style in interview rallies heavily on youth — an easy, the two free stopovers permitted on most return flights to Oz — into a quasi state visit to the Far East.

At the moment, his television persona most resembles that of a sane, male Princess of Wales: shyly smiling, above the dirt, compassionate. He was seen twice yesterday about "reaching out to people." His benign and forgiving grin when Major's Serpentine dinghy accusation was read back to him was nicely judged. But there will be far tougher interrogations to come before the public is persuaded to drop the pilot or, as John Major would put it, sink him.

Why won't the BFI put film fans in the picture?



Ros Coward

CARDS I received from France this Christmas took a new angle on the nativity. They celebrated the birth of cinema on December 28, 1895, confidently dating this from the Lumière brothers' first shows to paying audiences in the UK, by contrast, December 26 stopped by unnoticed. Here no definitive birthdate was agreed so we have protracted and imprecise celebrations. Television settled for the 1988 date, starting its tributes last year. Most cinema events will be this year, the centenary of the first commercial showings in Britain.

There are many here who might have welcomed a chance to raise the profile of cinema history and culture. Cinema is enjoying an extraordinary renaissance and annually there are 35,000 applicants for media studies courses. Yet Britain remains a sorry place for cinephiles. Even in London, it's difficult to see old films and the ideal of a vibrant identifiable national cinema remains a dream.

Compared with other enthusiasts, cinephiles might seem well served. They do have the British Film Institute, set up way back in the thirties to encourage cinema appreciation. Yet in spite of £17 million of public money each year this institution is remote from popular interest in cinema. Plans for the centenary are symptomatic. Last October when the French were steaming ahead with national celebrations, the BFI hosted a conference to establish who invented the Cinema? thus focusing on who invented which bits of machinery rather than the spectacle of cinema.

Most of the BFI's centenary events are meant to have much wider appeal, especially the Cinema Day in June when all cinema seats will cost £1. But could these diffuse events become damp squibs? The BFI has many impressive achievements. It has a world class archive and runs the successful Museum of the Moving Image. It gives invaluable support to regional cinemas and new film-makers. But it also has a reputation for exclusivity and in the past has been rather more successful in provoking outbursts from committed detractors, like film-maker Alan Parker, than in mobilising mass enthusiasm.

Part of this dates from the seventies when film studies were fighting for academic respectability and the BFI sheltered academics contemp-

tuous of ordinary film fans. Anyone who stumbled into one of the elitist and introspective seminars of that time is probably still recovering. Yet, with those days long gone, hostility sometimes persists because in other more important ways the Institute is still inward looking and inaccessible.

For many years my household has belonged to the BFI. Yet this has meant very little more than a ticket in the pocket. Being a member brings no special involvement with moving image culture. Communication is minimal. The whole institution is uninviting from the set-up of the reception area to the brusque responses to requests for information. No wonder members don't think of using the library (involving another extra charge), or, if teaching in this area, don't consider calling on the BFI for resources. Even the National Film Theatre is far from jolly.

Membership of other bodies carries with it a sense of involvement, fostered by vivid corporate communications. The RSPB, with more members than the Tory Party, provides bird lovers with a quarterly magazine bristling with local and global campaign issues, and argues the political case with its membership. Frequent consultation underpins this work.

IN CONTRAST, the BFI has a didactic profile. Recent appointments suggest it is trying to change. But there is a long way to go. No BFI member I've spoken to can remember being consulted about anything. The BFI seem to hold much of a brief for democracy. Policies seem driven by personal preferences rather than a democratic assessment of the field of operation. This secretiveness has worsened with the Institute's move into television and film production. In doing the same job as the commercial sector, what ought to be a resource has become a competitor.

Unsurprisingly then, cinephiles find themselves more at home in the now flourishing small multi-screen arthouse which are springing up as a result of a recent surge in cinema attendance. My local example, the Clapham Picture House in south London, offers among other attractions, a successful children's club. It makes no profit but has management support as a way of educating the next generation of film enthusiasts.

The manager is broadly aware of the BFI's activities, but says they hardly impinge on his work. He neither asks for nor receives information or help. He does not need the BFI. But maybe it now needs people like him if it is going to have any relevance for cinema's real enthusiasts. The battle to take cinema seriously has been won. The BFI should find a new open role for cinema's second century.



Islam's sweeping success in Turkey's recent elections is proof, says John Gray, that the West's grip on the world is loosening

If the fez fits

WILL the new century we are approaching resemble the one that is ending, in which the hold of Western power and values seemed to reach to the last corners of the Earth? A portent of things to come in 1996 and beyond may be found in the results of the parliamentary elections held on Christmas Eve in Turkey. The radical Islamic party Refah took the largest number of seats in parliament, forcing the country's two rival centre-right secular parties into talks aimed at denying Refah participation in government.

Whatever the outcome of these talks the election result marks a watershed for Turkey, a westward-leaning republic founded by Kemal Atatürk more than 70 years ago. The country seems set to enter a period of political instability in which the future of its Western, secular inheritance can no longer be assured.

This is a prospect with unsettling implications for all those who expect the world to converge on Western, secular institutions and values. It undermines the basis of much

Western policy and diplomacy, which rests on the belief that modernisation and Westernisation are one and the same. The Turkish example is one of many suggesting this Eurocentric belief is an illusion. The epoch we are entering towards the close of the century will not be one of universal Westernisation but rather the opposite — an epoch in which Western models are rejected throughout much of the world.

The belief that a modern state had to be a replica of a Western model was at the root of the radical reforms with which Atatürk inaugurated the Turkish republic in 1923. He abolished the Islamic caliphate, scrapped the Arabic script in favour of the Roman alphabet, banned religious schools and enforced a dress code in which the chador and the fez were prohibited. A military hero, he imposed Western civil law and in effect created Turkey as a nation-state from the ruins of the Ottoman empire. Like his contemporary, Lenin, he perceived the indigenous traditions of his own country as expressions of backwardness, and saw progress in emulating the institutions and ab-

economic growth superior to that of most Western countries have been sustained despite — or because — of the fact that Western models of government and society have been repudiated. Though their circumstances and histories are vastly different, developments in Turkey and Malaysia exemplify the same historical movement, in which non-occidental peoples are increasingly rejecting — as flawed, declining and destructive — their traditions — Western models of modernisation and development.

This is a movement that is not restricted to Islamic cultures. The East Asian tiger economies attribute their extraordinary achievements to their resistance to Western individualism and economic laissez-faire.

The transformation of Singapore, within a generation, from a Third World country into one in which income levels are often higher and medical care for the average family is better than in First World countries such as New Zealand and Britain, has not occurred by its copying any Western exemplar. It is Singapore rather than any Western country which is cited by Chinese and Vietnamese economic reformers if they are pressed to point to a model for their societies, as they shake off the Westernising influence of Marxism.

IN THE Confucian as in the Islamic world there is a growing recognition that the universal authority which Western societies have claimed for their institutions and values is based on nothing more substantial than the global power Western states exercised during their brief period of hegemony from the 16th century to the present. It is difficult to assess the impact on Western societies of the dawning realisation that the epoch in which they were the governing and tutor to the free world has come to an end. We can be sure, though, that it will be incalculably large, and accompanied by enormous disorientation and denial. The adjustment may be traumatic, especially in the United States, where the conviction is unshakable that all human beings are born American and belong to particular cultures only by accident. The 21st century will be one in which the concrete achievements of non-occidental peoples compel Western societies to relinquish the image they have of themselves as the peacemakers of human progress.

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Terence Cuneo

History in the detail

TERENCE CUNEO, who has died aged 88, was one of the most popular artists of our times. Yet on another level he was a complete failure. If giving pleasure to many kinds of people is an indication of artistic excellence, then Cuneo will have to be regarded among the greatest of 20th century British artists. However he is unrepresented in the Tate Gallery.

Nor have most of those who establish reputations in the arts, or write the history of 20th century art, chosen to notice his work. Cuneo's existence was never acknowledged in the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, the showcase of artistic prestige, and few critics have deigned to mention him. However the man who signed his paintings with a mouse, and often a cheeky one, did not need to worry.

Paintings by Cuneo are to be found in the Royal Collection. In many army messes, in the possession of British Rail, in boardrooms, in London clubs and in a multitude of places, official and private, where events of state are

remembered. He is among the royal family's favourite artists — witness the CVO he received in 1994 — but he is equally loved by railway buffs and car enthusiasts. His set of stamps commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Great Western Railway is treasured, and he has been one of the most reproduced of 20th century British artists.

There can be no doubt that long after painters who today figure prominently in books on 20th century art are forgotten, Cuneo's Tanks and How To Draw Them, published in 1942 with many illustrations, will be eagerly sought after. So too will the other work Cuneo was doing at that time.

Around the beginning of the second world war he was sent to France by the Illustrated London News. He later went on to do propaganda paintings for the Ministry of Information and the Foreign Office, and became one of the most successful of war artists.

The young man who had been trained at the Chelsea Art School and Slade understood his own talents. He became a vastly successful portrait painter — one of that kind rare today, to whom historians will turn. It was hardly surprising Cuneo was called upon to paint people like King Hussein of Jordan, Edward Heath and Field Marshal Montgomery. He could always catch a likeness, and he had an eye for both character and the nature of a role.

Even rarer, he could unerringly suggest the atmosphere of an event. This talent was coupled with a sharp eye for detail and the ability to convey it so that recognition is instant. It is the key to Cuneo's abilities as an artist.

He was skilled at recording both events and objects. Historians who want to know how Lance Corporal Rambahadur Limby, of the Tenth Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles won his VC in Sarawak



War paint... Terence Cuneo with his painting of the Scots Guards attack at Tumbledown

in 1965 will have to turn to Cuneo's painting of the event. Equally, those who wish to recall what one of those little Italian railway engines that used to climb over 7,000 feet in under 40 miles from Masawa, in Eritrea, looked like can examine a painting by Cuneo. He knew, for he had driven one of them.

No wonder he went on to become the most sought-after painter of events of state. From George VI at the Royal Artillery Mess, Woolwich, to the Queen at Lloyd's with the Duke of Edinburgh to lay the foundation stone of Lloyd's new building — such paintings are the stuff of history.

It would, though, be wrong to think of Cuneo as simply a painter of official events, of battles, of the celebrated, and

of the machinery of the 20th century. He loved horses and other animals and, from the Camargue to America, he painted them and the countryside.

He was an insatiable traveller. Among the places he went to in search of subjects were not just France, Italy and the United States, but also north and South Africa, Ethiopia and the Far East. Indeed, the impression created by the largest of his many exhibitions, which was held at the Mall Galleries in 1988, was of an ever enquiring mind and eye. The key note of this exhibition, and of earlier one-man shows at the Sladmore Gallery, was variety.

Relevant, too, is the fact that Cuneo had a very English sense of humour. It

was manifested in his paintings of mice in human guise, and in his portrait of Surgeon Commander Ebenezer Bihou-Smit RN. He was a man who in Cuneo's own words "Served aboard Her Majesty's frigate *Plunderer* from 1880 to 1881 when, owing to an unfortunate diagnosis concerning the Admiral's spleen, he resigned his commission and took a post as veterinary surgeon, ashore."

The man was immediately recognisable. That was the point. Illustration is an important aspect of art and Cuneo was a splendid illustrator.

Terence Tanton Cuneo, artist, born November 1, 1907; died January 3, 1996

Appreciation: Lincoln Kirstein

IN HIS piece on Lincoln Kirstein (obituary, January 6) Dale Harris concluded that Kirstein would be best remembered as the champion of men greater than himself, yet I always thought of Lincoln as the greatest living American — the man who brought Balanchine to New York in 1933, and under whose guidance Balanchine and Stravinsky collaborated on *Agon* (1947).

Kirstein's grandfather came to America after the European revolutions of 1948 and Lincoln was born almost 60 years later, in Rochester, New York. Resigned to being a second-rater in all the arts (he tried drawing and even stained glass), Lincoln, while still at Harvard, as his obituary mentioned, founded the literary quarterly *Hound & Horn* (publishing Pound, Eliot and Katherine Anne Porter among others), and the Harvard Society for Contemporary Art. He was the parent of the Museum of Modern Art. Having strong views on painting, Lincoln later quarrelled with the directors of the museum over their fidelity to Picasso throughout all his various metamorphoses.

I thought Lincoln an unreliable judge of painting. His love for a smooth finish led him to scorn the late Impressionists. But for sculpture he had a good eye. His house was a board of marvellous bronzes by Gaston Lachaise, Samu Nouguchi and Elis Nadelman.

It was at the ill-fated Shakespeare Exhibition, just before it was closed in 1955 that Lincoln stood spellbound before Astrid Zydower's sculpture *The Young Shakespeare*, and two groups in high relief of *The Death of Antony* and *The Masque in The Tempest*.

Within a couple of years Young Shakespeare (stated with his book and now dust in a corner) sat dreaming before his other Festival Theatre at Stratford-on-the-Avon, while the two other groups were suspended on walls to right and left of the dress circle. What the casting and transport must have cost Lincoln I cannot imagine.

When Lincoln's sly, bawdy, wartime *Rhymes of A FFC* found no English publisher, I hawked them round London without success; but Auden loved them and they became famous.

Philip Johnson's beautiful New York State Theater (on the south side of Lincoln Plaza; but it nearly had been pulled down again when Lincoln found the orchestra pit too small.

At another wave of the Kir-

stein wand, summer theatres appeared at Saratoga Springs and a handsome block to house students of the School of American Ballet joined the other buildings around Lincoln Center. Kirstein sold works of art to help pay for these buildings himself.

Fearful rows sometimes interrupted our correspondence, which had begun in 1949, eight months before we met. Lincoln was the best letter writer who ever lived.

Richard Buckle

LINCOLN KIRSTEIN, a giant of a man, mentally and physically, was one of those rare people with whom you were looking forward to your next encounter even before you had finished the present one. Such was the range of his knowledge and erudition, enthusiasm and observation of the cultural and political scene.

Naturally, the focus of our conversations was on ballet, the New York City Ballet and the Royal Ballet in particular. He would talk about many things and many people with insight, knowledge and wit, but not necessarily without prejudice. Visits to galleries and museums in his company were treasured adventures.

Encounters with Lincoln were not always plain sailing. During a period of religious fervour he begged me to attend mass, with breakfast afterwards. He collected me early that morning from my New York hotel, dressed not in the usual Savile Row black serge suit, but in a white tee shirt, black trousers and sneakers. He drove me to the Pauline church with a degree of astonishing recklessness, crossing at least two sets on traffic lights at red. Mass was relatively calm. On leaving, we changed on foot to the cafeteria of the adjoining university through pouring rain. Lincoln ignoring all puddles, with water splashing in every direction. Breakfast was conducted in silence. Suddenly, Lincoln was gone.

This was typical of the man. He was visionary and an instigator, impatient, intolerant, but always in pursuit of an enthusiasm or cause, that wonderfully fertile mind never at rest.

Lincoln displayed a streak of genius. What influence he wielded on American cultural life! He was one of the most remarkable men whom I had the good fortune to know.

John Tooley

Harry McLevy

Staying on the case

HARRY MCLEVY, who has died aged 59, was Scottish-born, an organiser of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union. Apart from national service, he spent a lifetime in the engineering industry, as a shop steward, a convenor, as Dundee district secretary and as a rank and file militant on the left of the often deeply-riven union.

Born in Dundee to a mother toiling in the textile mills and a father who was a shipyard plater's helper, McLevy served his apprenticeship as a fitter in Dundee and on the Clyde; the two key battlegrounds of his too short life. Although he left the Communist Party in the early eighties and I myself signed him on in the Labour Party, McLevy was a lifelong communist, of a particularly Scottish type — sufficiently church that at his interment on the snowy slopes of Birkhill Cemetery in Dundee there was a reading by a Church of Scotland minister from the Communist Manifesto; and from the grave McLevy himself seemed to warn the ruling classes of Europe to "tremble before the communist revolution".

Fidelity to the working class movement and to Marxism was the hallmark of his life. Almost 1,000 people

attended his funeral, many of them from the Communist Party-trained sixties generation of shop stewards, but there were younger workers for whom Harry was a hero, and hard bitten journalists shedding a tear.

McLevy played a key role in the historic 1959 apprentices strike which spread like wild fire from the Clyde and forced the engineering employers to hike the notoriously low wages of young apprentices. Many were schooled in that struggle, including McLevy's pal Jimmy Reid and his later adversary Sir Gavin Laird, now a governor of the BBC and the Bank of England.

Some of McLevy's greatest days were spent in Dundee's Caledon shipyard. In one of his first elections — as was the engineering union's style, McLevy seemed to spend his life running in elections — Harry turned up at the yard on the big day to find that the Caledon Young Communist League had posted in huge lettering on the hull of a half-built ship "For A Bevy... Vote McLevy".

They did. McLevy was elected as convenor of the yard where he quickly built a reputation as a mass leader and an inspirational orator. When once the yard was threatened with closure McLevy told an outdoor audience of thousands "It they want to close



Great Scot... Harry McLevy, faithful to the struggle

our yard they'll have to bring the Black Watch... they'll have to winkle us out one by one."

During the seventies, at a time of intense class struggle in Britain, McLevy was a well-read, intelligent and find the stirring words which moved thousands of workers into strikes, days of action, demonstrations, even on issues like Chile or the presence of unwelcome political visitors.

But he never forgot that the first task of the trades unionist was the direct representation of members at work; and as his other pal from the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, Jimmy Airlie, said in a fine oration at the funeral "When a worker had Harry McLevy on his case he always got more than his money's worth."

It is particularly poignant

that McLevy died before final achievement of a Scottish parliament which was, in many ways, the cause of his life. He saw long before it was in vogue the democratic and, yes, the nationalist case for home rule. As a member, and indeed to his great pride the president of the Scottish TUC, McLevy played a crucial role in shaping the new parliament, proportionally elected, seeking a fifty-fifty gender balance, "a parliament of a new type" as he always called it. Although approaching retirement McLevy's vigour and drive made it indeed likely that he might have sought and won membership to that parliament.

The first chairman of "Scotland United" — his ghost will be there in the timber when it comes. Farewell Harry McLevy, a working class hero. We'll be lucky if we look upon your likes again.

George Galloway

Harry McLevy, trade unionist, born August 28, 1936; died December 24, 1995

Yahya Ayyash

A war of the shadows

YAHYA AYYASH, who was professionally assassinated in the Gaza Strip, inspired the strongest of feelings. For Israelis, he was a demon; a mass murderer who sent his own acolytes to their deaths alongside their victims. For many Palestinians, he was a hero, a symbol of Israeli intelligence and striking at the heart of the Zionist enemy. Ayyash has been linked with up to 11 suicide bombing missions, which took the lives of over 70 Israelis and foreign visitors, and those of 10 bombers.

But he could persuade so many young men to die in a measure of Ayyash's formidable personality, as well as his skills as a bomb-maker and mission planner. It also testified to the black-hearted bitterness of the conflict between Arab and Jew.

In keeping with his dismal chosen calling, Ayyash was a shadowy figure. Even his age is in some doubt, variously reported as 29, 30 and 32. A native of Rafat in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, Ayyash was the son of a farmer. The family was sufficiently well-to-do to send him to Ramallah's Bir Zeit university, where he studied electrical engineering and is thought to have studied chemistry, two skills he put to deadly use.

Ayyash did not come to the notice of the Israeli security forces until the dying months of the Intifada, the Palestinian uprising which erupted in late 1987. The first operation attributed to him was a van-bomb discovered in the Tel Aviv suburb of Ramat Gan. It was defused. Over the coming months, say security sources, Ayyash was involved in a number of bomb attacks, and

at least one shooting. His first mass murder came in April 1984, when a suicide car bomber blew himself up next to a bus in Afula, an Israeli town just north of the West Bank. Eight people were killed and more than 40 wounded. That bombing set the grisly pattern. Five ruthless suicide attacks followed, and Ayyash was also linked, more dubiously, with a double suicide bombing near Natanya in early 1985, in which 22 Israelis, mostly soldiers, died.

Since last summer, little has been heard of "the Engineer", or indeed of the military wing of the Islamist movement he served with fervour, Hamas. In the last weeks of 1995 Hamas promised Yasser Arafat's self-rule Palestinian authority it would launch no more military operations from the autonomous areas of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

By then, Ayyash had been living for several months in Gaza, moving between safe houses. Arafat had consistently denied that the bomber was living in Palestinian-controlled areas. In fact, he was able to resume a near-normal life, to the extent that his wife joined him.

Last Thursday, she bore a second son. The first, Bara', is four years old. A day before Ayyash lifted a mobile cellular telephone to his ear. A tiny but deadly explosive charge was detonated. The Engineer, the region's most skilled and ruthless bomber, was killed instantly.

Derek Brown

Yahya Ayyash, Hamas militant, born (reportedly) March 22, 1966; died January 5, 1995

Letter

Peter Coles writes: Charlie Chaplin's relationship with Lita Grey Chaplin (obituary, January 6) provided the sole occasion in the comedian's career when he was unable to make a leading lady appear to be expert. There was Georgia Hale in *The Gold Rush*, Myrna Kennedy (*The Circus*), Virginia Cherrill (*City Lights*), Paulette Goddard in *Modern Times* and *The Great Dictator*, and of course Edna Purviance, his star in *A Woman of Paris* and his earliest two-reelers. The Little Fellow retained Purviance on his pay-roll until her death. Iso-

bel Elson, the veteran British film star told me when I was directing a play in the States that "Charlie could make a tick act". She had played a lead role in *Monte Carlo*, *Verdoux* and certainly in that comedy-drama his direction of the comic Martha Raye was masterly, as was his handling of "at natural actress" Claire Bloom in *Limelight*. Chaplin talked to make the stick that was Lita Grey Chaplin into any act of actress at all. For the rest, he was, as George Bernard Shaw said, the only true anus the cinema has ever given us.

Birthdays

Shirley Bassey, singer, 58; David Bowie, rock musician and actor, 48; John Cabill, chairman, British Airways, 66; Robin Ellis, actor, 54; Prof Stephen Hawking CBE, FRS, mathematician, 64; Andrew Hunter, Conservative MP, 53; Howard Jones, governor, Belmarsh prison, 50; Air Commodore Joan Metcalfe, former director, RAF Nursing Services, 72; Yvette Mimieux, actress, 57; Ron Moody, actor, 72; Hanae Mori, fashion designer, 70; Bob Farry, Labour MP, 63; Ken Purvis, Labour MP, 57; Imelda Staunton, Labour MEP, 57; Prof Brian Reddaway, economist, 83; Charles Tomlinson, poet and professor of English, Bristol University, 66; Galina

Ulanov, former prima ballerina, 86; Geoffrey Whalen, manager, director and deputy chairman, Peugeot Talbot, 62; Prof Alan Wilson, vice-chancellor, University of Leeds, 57

Death notices

Love, On July 30 1995 in the Aggie Park Nursing Home, Southport, Eric aged 82 years, formerly of Bolton, husband of the late Mrs. Ethel, father of David and Richard and the late Mrs. Aileen. A former Director of the Great Western Railway. Cremated on Monday June 1996 at 11.15. Donations to the British Red Cross, 20, Roper Street, Southport, or to the British Red Cross, 20, Roper Street, Southport, or to the British Red Cross, 20, Roper Street, Southport. Tel: 01705 523 435

to place your announcement telephone 0171 511 9200

Jackdaw



land in an effort to reduce the numbers of voles... Last summer an alarm was raised in Israel when it was thought that piranhas had been introduced into the Sea of Galilee. However, the fish have been found to be relatively harmless herbivores... *Reviews of Christopher Lacer's book, Naturalized Animals, Times Literary Supplement*

going to destroy the earth (although it is)... it's that it doesn't make us unbelievably happy. *Mother Jones magazine looks at the last and next 20 years*

Don't call us SWISS PTT issued a promotional card (without the white optical track)... This card was given to passengers on the morning flight to Geneva. I did not get one of these cards... I did not see any other special cards for the exhibition itself, but Slovak Telecom gave away their 1994 catalogue... MMT is a Russian telecom using Umet cards... the cards on the stand were probably dummy cards. The poor English of the people on the stand and my poor Russian meant that detailed information was hard to get. I will contact Moscow for more information... I finally have some news from Indonesia. One of the biggest supermarkets has issued three cards with fruits on them, including the Durian, 100 units... A private Coca-Cola card has

been released in Pakistan. I do not think this card is a real issue, but is in fact an over-print. The reason I say this is that the control number can be seen under the surface of the paint... I expect this will be on people's wants list. *Meticulous reporting from beyond the valley of the anoraks - International Telephone Cards magazine*

King sized TRUE-BLUE Elvis fans know that "The King" would have been 61 years old [today]. But here are some facts that may surprise you: ● His natural hair colour wasn't black. It was a light blondish — but he dyed it to copy singer Roy Orbison, who had black hair. ● Elvis is from the Norwegian name "Alvis" which means "all wise" ● At one time, Elvis was the largest single taxpayer in the US... he reached the 91 per cent tax bracket! ● His shoe size was 11-D. But he wore size 12 combat boots when he was in the Army. ● Elvis' favourite reading

material: books on the spiritual and the occult. Whenever Elvis went on tour, he took more than 250 books packed in two trunks. When he died on Aug. 16, 1977, he was in his bathroom reading *The Shroud of Turin*. ● Elvis' last words were in response to his girlfriend Ginger Alden's warning not to fall asleep in the bathroom. His reply: "OK, I won't." *Nobody does this kind of thing better than the National Enquirer*

Lone gunman HE IS A Loner — that pearl of great social price, whose scarcity and evasiveness doubles his market value. If you succeed in battling through the false trails of discontinued telephone numbers and the thickets of discouraging answering-machine messages... then you are in for an exhilarating ride. The temperature rises when he comes through the door. The Loner is not boring. He may be mad, his appearance eccentric, but he is not married, mortgaged

are unconfiding and untrusting, even when they manage to take a civil interest. Their domestic lives tend to be obsessive and faddish. ● You are unlikely to be invited into a Loner's dwelling, but if you are, you can be sure it will not be comfortable or welcoming... you will be confronted by a bedsit of stomach-churning nastiness last decorated during the Festival of Britain, illuminated by one bare light-bulb... ungraced by the standard amenities of bath or fridge. *Sounds like Paradise dear, Rupert Christiansen in Harpers & Queen*

Ordinary folk

THE WORLD as a whole, rather than just the richest bits of it, is now developing its first mass middle-class: people who can afford to travel, to telephone around the world, to pick and choose from a global culture and to get a westernised education. These are the people who are most likely to learn, and accept, the "different-but-

equal" model: homosexuality that has co-existed for centuries in the West; art they have money to explore life choices that few subsistence cultures can allow. Before long a society that develops a large and reasonably well-off middle class classically "affords" homosexuals... In effect what (Donald's) has done for Fox and Disney, the global emergence of ordinary gayness is doing for sexual culture. Or might fairly wonder whether such homogenisation entirely to the good. Anthropologists studying traditional models of sex and gender had better work quickly. *The Economist's financial rationale for the new openness about the "very ordinary" world-wide minorities of homosexuals*

E-mail jackdaw@guestian.co.uk; fax 0171-713 456; write Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Edited by Vanessa Hrwol

Education are W of ma

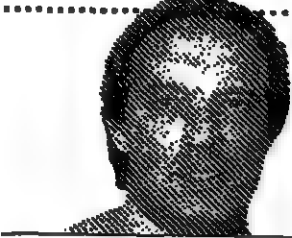
Wealth

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سكنا من الامل

Highly trained workforce is worthy ideal but does not provide complete answer to the demand for growth

Educated guesses are wide of mark



Will Hutton

EDUCATION and training are like apple pie and motherhood. After all, the better trained and educated the workforce, the better the performance of the economy and the more just the society.

Although such protestations are self-evidently true, they fall short of providing a robust guide to just how much a government can rely on education and training to deliver the growth process. A well-educated and trained workforce may be a necessary condition for growth, but plainly it is not sufficient. So what else has to be done?

With the Labour Party musing education and training as one of its bedrock policy areas, the whole question is jumping up the league table of economic and political salience. Here is one area of policy where the Labour leader talks — as he did in Tokyo last week and in Singapore today — confidently and credulously.

In a world in which the barriers that inhibit firms and capital from moving across national borders are falling, Tony Blair argued, the only way for a necessarily less mobile workforce to empower itself is to offer ever more creativity and productivity — and that means more education and training. Britain, he declared, had to be the knowledge capital of Europe.

This is a noble and just cause. Even if there were few economic advantages, education and training are public goods in their own right and Britain has for too long not given them priority. But there is a danger in going over the top, in so elevating education and training's economic importance that they are given the status of a growth theory in their own right. The politics of this are obvious; the economics much less so.

Labour politicians can say something which is economically and morally right, and which sits more easily with centre-left values than those of new-right Conservatives. More importantly, education and training offer no disturbing challenge to any of capital's cherished freedoms; indeed, by raising productivity they offer business higher returns.

But what about the economics? Again, while there is no disputing the value of education and training, recent research is sobering about how much they can achieve by themselves. The necessary expenditure to close income inequality, raise skill levels and lower unemployment is vast; the pay-offs are slow, and unless education and

training are embedded in a wider array of policies, notably raising levels of investment and expectations of future demand, the results are likely to be variable at best — disappointing at worst.

The international evidence on training is particularly disappointing. And even quality education, as the Japanese have just proved, cannot save an economy from the consequence of external shocks like an overvalued yen. Indeed, five years of currency overvaluation, delivered by those fated global financial markets, have rendered a generation of high-quality Japanese education powerless.

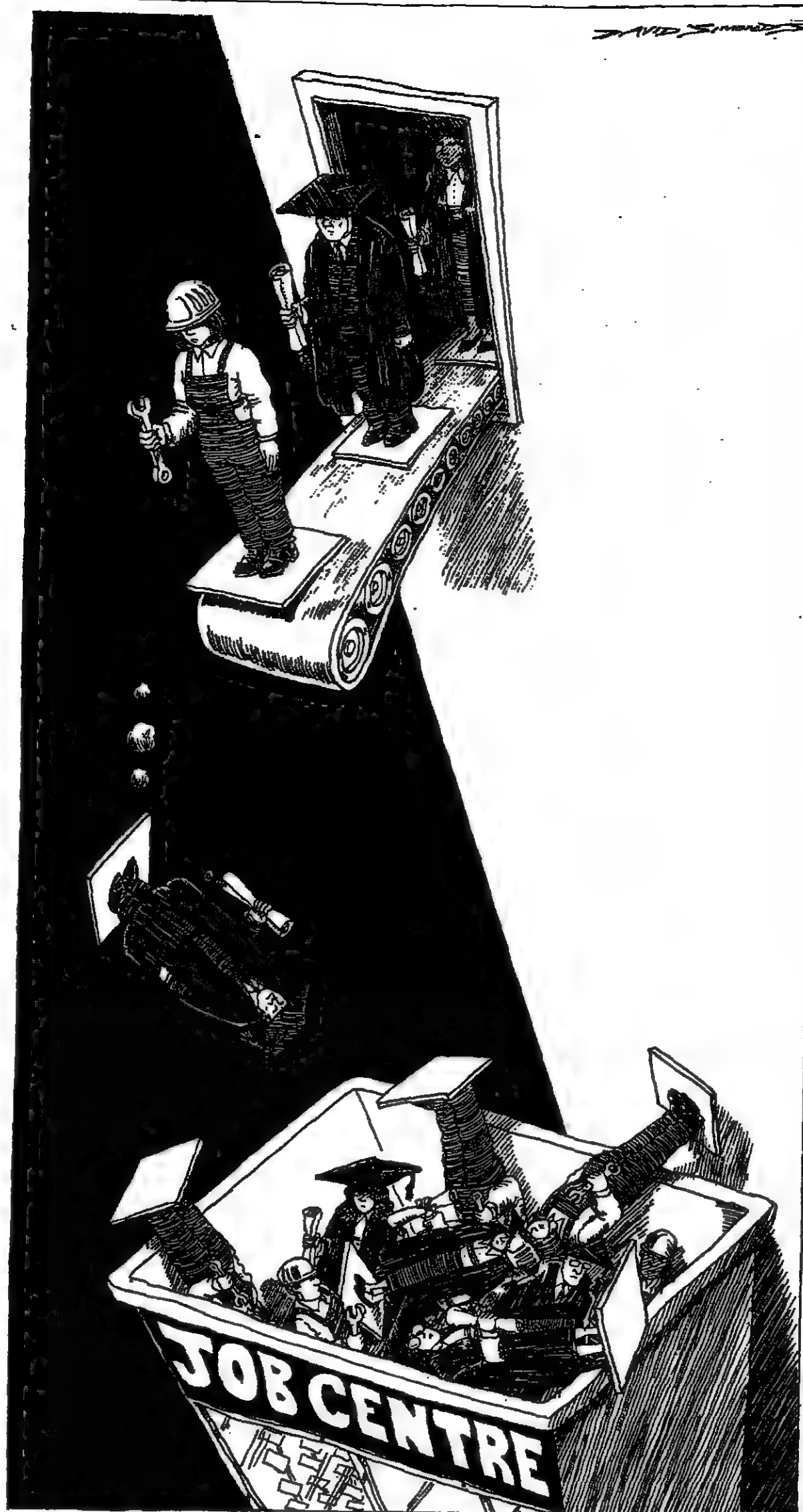
Worse, if globalisation is understood so to minimise a country's macro-economic options that it cannot organise an expansionary monetary and fiscal policy, then one of the paradoxes is that education and training spending will have lower returns, not higher.

Nobody argues that growing unemployment and rising income inequality are not caused by low skills; the issue is by how much. The emerging consensus is that educational and training shortfalls explain about 20 per cent of the problem.

RICHARD Freeman and Larry Katz say in one American study (Working Under Different Rules, Russell Sage, 1994) that between 7 and 25 per cent of rising inequality is due to inadequate skills; while Steve Nickell and Brian Bell (Oxford Review of Economic Policy, Vol 11, No 1) found that in Britain the decline in real demand for unskilled workers contributed up to 20 per cent of the long-run increase in unemployment between the 1960s and 1980s. These are important figures — but the other 80 per cent of the story needs to be addressed as well.

Another difficulty is that the consensus policy responses do not work very well. International studies show that job creation schemes, whether in the form of job subsidies or reductions in social overheads, have little or no long-run effect — largely because any new jobs tend to displace old ones. And reducing social overheads, which ministers endlessly intone as the sole means to lower unemployment, have little or no impact either. In Denmark, where employers pay no social security contributions, Nickell and Bell say that unemployment is around the EU average.

This conforms with what elementary economic theory would predict. If employers are relieved of paying social security contributions, in the long run they pay workers that part of the real product wage that used to go in social security contributions as extra wages. In other words, workers' wages rise as the social security "wedge" is reduced — and the long-run employment-boosting impact is nil. Employers' national insurance contributions are an excellent way of raising reve-



and lowering real wages with no long-run unemployment effects and government policy has been completely wrong in this area as in so many, shuffling the tax base for no long-run employment gains. Training, at least, offers more certain returns — but

wage expectations above what employers could pay? Training, they say, is not the saviour of the European unemployment problem. The assessment from the US is equally sobering. Professor Barry Bluestone of the University of Massachusetts reports (American Prospect,

man of the University of Chicago says that to improve the educational attainment of the bottom half of the US population to take income inequality back to 1979 levels would cost \$2 trillion. In British terms that is equivalent to spending around £250 billion!

The larger point is that the industrialised world is suffering from a multitude of shocks to which education and training can offer only a partial response. In the US, Freeman and Katz identify de-industrialisation, de-unionisation, low-cost competition, redistributive taxation and active trade and industrial policies as part of a balanced policy response along with education and training — and all within a programme aiming to raise demand and investment levels.

Competition

Only one week left to enter your economic forecasts for 1996. Predictions for GDP growth and underlying inflation this year, the seasonally adjusted claimant count of unemployment for December 1996, house prices — based on annual growth in the Halifax index — and how much the Chancellor cuts the standard rate of income tax, on a postcard to The Guinness Economics Desk, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. A mugshot of Champagne for the winner!

only marginally. In the above-mentioned Oxford Review, Lars Calmfors and Per Steingard analyse the impact of Sweden's training programmes, and while they do better than job creation schemes in lowering unemployment the results were "very unstable". Sometimes training hit the jackpot, but sometimes it increased unemployment by raising workers'

Winter 1995) that most US training schemes launched since the 1980s have shown dubious returns, and even when they are successful the advantages in higher earnings and employment are small. As for using education to solve the problem, US estimates on how much potential spending is involved are mind-boggling. James Heck-

demonstrating in a survey of nine countries that the crucial determinant of productivity is not skills but managerial capacity and strategy. Well-organised, long-termist firms are the keys to economic success; not training in itself.

The good news is that Mr Blair is beginning to recognise this. In his Singapore speech he touched on the question with more conviction than he has since he became leader, talking of building a stakeholder economy where companies with reformed legal and managerial structures could generate more trust, long-termism and creativity between managers and workers. The beginnings of a rounded approach are discernible — but it will mean a tougher line on the City and corporate governance than New Labour has so far seemed ready for.

If Labour is to succeed in government it will need to build up these ideas even more. Education and training cannot stand alone, but to say so and do more means moving beyond the policies of apple pie and motherhood — and challenging the interests of the powerful. Reforming capitalism has never implied anything else.

Water firms need mutual principle

Debate

Gerald Holtham

GRAND companies rise and fall. The methods of a hundred years back, railway and steamship companies, are now either deceased or transformed beyond recognition. Corporate structures change too. In our own time, these pillars of financial services, the building societies, are slowly passing from the scene. Or at least the mutual, or co-operative, principle, which underlay the societies, is being put to death in the financial sector.

That is inevitable. Mutuality still has great work to do but its contemporary calling is elsewhere. In finance, there are still 81 institutions organised on the mutual principle, but they are generally losing out to the hundreds of banks and insurance companies registered in London, which are organised as ples. Two large building societies have converted to public status and more will undoubtedly do the same way.

The difference is in the capital structure. In a plc, shareholders put up equity capital and "own" the company. More equity capital can be obtained by rights issues. In a mutual, the users of the company's services become "members" and acquire voting rights to the board of the company. The savers in a building society, for example, provide its capital, and they all get one vote.

In contrast to the last century, when the mutual societies began, personal relationships count for little today, and people would increasingly rather have a higher interest rate on their savings (or a lower one on their loan) than have a vote. The plc banks' advantage in obtaining capital give them a competitive edge and the customers are voting with their feet.

But that does not mean the mutual principle is, or should be, dead in general. It sprang up originally where people could not get access to a competitive market for financial services, because information was lacking to support mutual confidence between people and corporations. Now that financial markets are very competitive and the information revolution continues to reduce costs, there is no need for mutuals there.

IN OTHER sectors, however, customer citizens are still denied access to competitive markets, notably in utilities, such as water. What better way to serve their interests than the old mutual principle?

The abiding flaw in privatisation was that it put the cart before the horse. What do we want from a public utility? That it provide the best possible service to customers, in an equitable way, making as efficient use as possible of inputs of labour and capital.

But we have created companies whose first aim is to demonstrate in a survey of nine countries that the crucial determinant of productivity is not skills but managerial capacity and strategy. Well-organised, long-termist firms are the keys to economic success; not training in itself.

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make money for directors and shareholders, incidentally providing a service. That is the wrong way round. Where technical change is opening up the possibility of genuinely competitive markets, as in telecommunications, it may not matter too much. With decent regulation everything might come out in the wash.

But where a natural monopoly will persist, we need to align the incentives of the directors of those companies with what we and the consumers want them to be. Any manager of a mutual will tell you that he does not have to worry only about the people who provide the capital, the shareholders. He has just as much to worry about the customers or "members" too. Indeed, they may be the same people. The same two-handed approach should be used in the water industry.

When the water company has a command vote, but they are a meter, you should become a "member" with a voting right to the board. After all, you are far more securely locked into that company than any shareholder, who can sell his holding on a whim. To be free, he just calls his broker ... you have to dig a well.

WITH over half the board of a utility elected by members, managers would have every incentive to study customers' interests. Cash flow would be channelled to reduce prices or make investments to improve water supply, not to capricious diversifications.

Nonetheless, the meaning of a share would change. If you own a share, you are a shareholder as a group would no longer control the board. They would become just one of two important sets of stakeholders. Shares could be bought and sold without altering corporate control. As long as the members were happy, the board would be safe from hostile takeover.

Water is an absolute necessity supplied under conditions of absolute monopoly. Nothing could be more free of risk. That is what makes mega-profits from water so outrageously unattractive. The appropriate way to finance investment in that sector is by issuing long-term bonds. All water companies are under-gearred. Mutual companies would prefer debt to expensive equity.

The beauty of this structure is that the company's response with much of the apparatus of industry regulation. Some may object that it is too late. What about water companies that have bought up other companies and merged with them? They will simply try to form a new holding company.

The Conservatives with their ideological obsession with free market capitalism are unlikely to favour this model. It simply leaves a future Labour government with the opportunity to do something novel and popular. Gerald Holtham is director of the Institute for Public Policy Research

Christmas spirit for all seasons

Worm's eye

Dan Atkinson

WHAT joy this Yuletide has given those of us who get pleasure from listening to businessmen whine about how "the country goes to sleep for a fortnight". Consequently, they say, "it is impossible to do business in the UK" during this intolerable period of sloth.

For once, this was true and we were all the better for it. A freeze on business activity meant a freeze on takeovers, mergers, sackings and other forms of worthless (indeed, worse than worthless) "enterprise".

But today is Plough Monday and the monster is reawakening. It is time to consider radical measures to extend the benefits of the shutdown.

A good start would be to decree similar two-week holidays at Easter, Midsummer and Bonfire. This would do wonders for national morale, because one would never be too far from a period during which it would be "impossible to do business". Then each of the various minority communities would be invited to tender one of their own festivals for adoption nationally. The winner, of course, would be that offering the largest number of days off.

To prevent financial interest dodging these restrictions, the shutdown periods would have to be enforced by the courts, rather than current bank holidays. Any business deals struck during these breaks would be void, as would any deal that could be shown to have been originated during the closed periods. All use of employed labour other than by the 999 services and for national defence would be prohibited.

In this way, perhaps one quarter of the year will be reappropriated from "business" — much as sheep and exhausted quarries can be reclaimed for the landscape. Imagine: three whole months without sackings, "downsizings", pointless takeovers, "unprofitable" share options, rail privatisations and the rest of the seamy "enterprise culture".

In the spirit of goodwill, however, it is necessary to throw big business just a little something. So here is the olive branch: New Year's Day, inaugurated by the Heath government to "celebrate" our immersion in the European Community, January 1 is a bank holiday the English and Welsh can do without (the Scots will have to surrender January 2). Hangover, unhealthy, bogus, artificially jolly — a perfect Euro-holiday, in fact.

Take it, with the compliments of the season. Any seasons.

Wealth cascading down the drain

Commentary

Chris Benjamin

WITH mutterings that the business cycle has peaked, we'll soon be back in Betty Davis economics: "Fasten your seatbelts, it's going to be a bumpy night". Groping in the dark jargon such as "levelling-off", "soft landings" and "bottoming out" has become all too familiar, but of all the soundbites inflicted on us, the prize must go to "wealth cascading down the generations". Allusions to water in Britain demand a Biblical self-

insurance in levitation — little cascading anywhere except through leaks.

But sloshing bucketsful of wealth around? Most people are still suffering the negative gravity of "trickle-down" while some water companies have plumbed the apogee of Britain's brand of capitalism, where executive rewards are inversely related to the water coming out of the taps.

At least we now have a vivid demonstration that pursuing "shareholder value" and linked boardroom incentives need have no relation to actual performance for customers. British industry has been foundering on this anomaly for decades. Today, many famous names

are just brass-plates for foreign ownership, or shells for imported value-added and sterling has continued its inexorable decline towards parity with coach-shells.

By any measure of what is passed on to future generations, the nation's wealth has sunk — any cascade is now a trickle. With the cushiest rewards for executives in various sizes of strump-pumps, representing lawyers, accountants, banks, brokers, investment funds etc. And each deal requires a fee to some of these. Whoever wins or loses, the strump-pumps go on. The nearest to a steady cascade around.

Chris Benjamin was under-secretary of state at the Department of Trade and Industry

executives scrambling for an extra million in severance. The origins of politicians' ideas for running a country have always been a mystery. "Cascading" has a distinctly Freudian ring but other seasonal suggestions have been pantomimes and children's games. For realism, another set of pieces is needed — various sizes of strump-pumps, representing lawyers, accountants, banks, brokers, investment funds etc. And each deal requires a fee to some of these. Whoever wins or loses, the strump-pumps go on. The nearest to a steady cascade around.

Chris Benjamin was under-secretary of state at the Department of Trade and Industry

Tourist rates - bank sells

Australia 2.03	France 7.40	Italy 2.410	Singapore 2.17
Austria 15.15	Germany 2.1800	Malta 0.54	South Africa 1.48
Belgium 44.50	Greece 395.00	Netherlands 2.4500	Spain 182.00
Canada 2.05	Hong Kong 11.78	New Zealand 2.32	Sweden 10.15
Cyprus 0.6975	Ireland 54.58	Norway 3.04	Switzerland 1.76
Denmark 8.49	Italy 10.9500	Portugal 227.00	Turkey 28.448
Finland 8.70	Israel 4.88	Saudi Arabia 5.79	USA 1.5100

Compiled by Reuters. Bank purchasing rates may not be available in all cases of transactions on Friday.

Indicators

TODAY — UK: Final M4 (Nov).	GER: Preliminary GDP data (95).
GER: Manufacturing Orders (Nov).	UK: Industrial Production (Nov).
US: Consumer Credit (Nov).	UK: Manufacturing Production (Nov).
JP: Current account (Nov).	US: Producer Prices (Dec).
US: PPI Excl. F & E (Dec).	
WEDNESDAY — GER: Unemployment (Dec).	FRIDAY — UK: CBI Distributive Trades Survey (Dec).
THURSDAY — UK: Whole World Trade (Oct).	US: Consumer Prices (Dec).
US: Retail Sales (Dec).	
FR: Press Conference on Annual Report.	Source: HSBC Markets Research.

Cricket

Ramprakash flops on the road to stupidity

Matthew Engel in Cape Town
TRADITIONAL cricket is over for this winter but, as England climbed out of their whites and into their jim-jams for more than two months of one-day games, the most enduring traditions go on.

second team, which is why the game was not that unimportant. The touring party, as revamped for the one-day games, now has 19 players and seven who were not in the Test team played on Saturday, all mustard-keen to force themselves into the one-day side proper.

It was precisely a year and a day since the end of the Sydney Test which established him, very temporarily, as the most exciting young star in the game.

theoretically, only Test match ticket-holders were being admitted, the profile was both younger and blacker than the Test crowd. Many of the English supporters may have been on strike, angry about the uncomfortable seats they were allocated by the ground authority, which has led to a formal protest letter from four-group leaders.

Vintage Richardson helps end Australia's run

RICHIE RICHARDSON, the West Indies captain, made a timely return to form as his side confirmed their revival by beating Australia by 14 runs in a limited-over World Series game in Brisbane.

five days with 14 balls to spare in a tense finish at The Gabba. Richardson scored an outstanding 81 in a vintage display which helped lift his side to 231 all out from 49.3 overs.

Muttiah Muralitharan, who is at the centre of a controversy over throwing the ball, an orthodox off-spinner and left-handed middle-order batsman, will join the squad in Melbourne tomorrow.

Racing

Man still looks a paler Dessie

Graham Cook
COMPARISONS are odorous, of course, but they are the currency of racing. No sooner had One Man destroyed his field in the King George VI Tripleprint Chase at Sandown on Saturday than the merit of his victory was being measured against the achievements of Desert Orchid, racing's most famous grey.

One Man's owner, John Hales, is on holiday and in his absence Richardson was unable to say whether Richard Dunwoody would retain the ride. The champion jockey was impressed, but believes One Man has a little to make up on Desert Orchid at his peak.

Desert Orchid won his first King George as a seven-year-old, and went on to triumph at Kempton three times subsequently. He also won a Gold Cup and a Whitbread, so suggestions that One Man is his equal are premature.

Ladbrokes offer 5-4 about One Man for the Gold Cup. Gamblers Anonymous should be sent a list of takers. Coral's 7-4 is the best price, but it is worth remembering that not only was One Man disappointing over Cheltenham's unforgiving fences behind Monsieur Le Cure two years ago, but Master Oats was almost certainly below his best on Saturday.

Gordon Richardson's first reaction was to suggest that One Man would have a single outing before the Gold Cup, the corresponding hobby to reassess One Man immediately but, like the thousands who travelled to Esher on Saturday, he was impressed by the grey's 14-lengths defeat of Monsieur Le Cure, with Master Oats, Val d'Aren and others strung out behind.

There is probably only a pot or two between the performances of Master Oats at Cheltenham and One Man at Sandown, but Gordon Richardson believes his horse was fractionally short of peak fitness on Saturday, is better suited by good ground, as a relatively youthful eight-year-old, has further improvement in him.

Celtic could be fit for Dubai

PETER SAVILL will decide in the next 10 days whether Celtic Swing will be trained for the Dubai World Cup, writes Graham Cook.
"It's been a slow healing process," he said of the 1994 champion two-year-old, who won the French Derby last year, but was found to have injured his knee after the Irish equivalent in July.

Saturday to see River North contest the Ing Barings Tolworth Hurdle, but his group 1 winner failed to grip in the straight and finished fifth behind another hurdlng debutant, Right Win.

Southwell (A.W. Flat)

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details including horse names, jockeys, and odds.

1.25 TYPICAL APPOINTMENT HANDICAP (OV) 110m

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details including horse names, jockeys, and odds.

1.50 WINDSOR HANDICAP (OV) 110m

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details including horse names, jockeys, and odds.

1.55 TYPICAL APPOINTMENT HANDICAP (OV) 110m

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details including horse names, jockeys, and odds.

2.15 WATERFORD BUDAUN AUCTION HANDICAP (OV) 110m

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details including horse names, jockeys, and odds.

2.45 WINDSOR HANDICAP (OV) 110m

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details including horse names, jockeys, and odds.

3.15 WINDSOR HANDICAP (OV) 110m

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details including horse names, jockeys, and odds.

3.45 WINDSOR HANDICAP (OV) 110m

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details including horse names, jockeys, and odds.



Gatecrasher... England's Phillip DeFreitas is bowled by Meyrick Pringle at Newlands.

Sport in brief

Radcliffe proves her class with second win

PAULA RADCLIFFE'S victory in Malindi, her second in successive weeks in the Coca-Cola international cross-country series, has added to her reputation as a runner of world class. The 22-year-old Londoner won the 48km course in 16min 29sec in the teeth of a gale. She pulled away from Kenya's Rose Cheruiyot 800m from the finish after the pair had left the rest of the field trailing in the early stages.

Three in a row for Tomba

ALBERTO TOMBA produced another brilliant second run to sweep to his third consecutive slalom victory in the men's Alpine Skiing World Cup race at Flachau, Austria, yesterday. The Italian was fourth going into the second leg but burst from the start but and stormed down the Griesenerkar course, clocking the second-best time of 53.05sec and a winning combined time of 1min 41.05sec.

Germany to bypass Bosman

Germany's 36 first and second division soccer clubs have voted to maintain by "gentlemen's agreement" a limit of three foreign players per side, even though it has been outlawed by the European Court after the Jean-Marc Bosman case. However, after the 36 vote in Frankfurt, Bayern Munich's president Franz Beckenbauer said he doubted whether the agreement — which the German Football Federation (DFB) has no means to enforce — would hold. "What happens when a club is struggling for survival, a thousand supporters are clamouring outside the gates and the club has a perfectly legal possibility of playing more foreigners?" he said. Nevertheless he promised that Bayern would conform to the agreement.

Top-shot Oakes qualifies

THE Commonwealth shot put champion Judy Oakes, who will be 38 next month, achieved the Atlanta Olympic Games qualifying standard when she won the shot at the FUSA Grand Prix indoor meeting at Crystal Palace with a throw of 18.1m — 11cm over the qualifying mark.

Packers dispatch champions

INSPIRED, the Green Bay Packers put to the sword the San Francisco 49ers, depositing the current Super Bowl champions 27-17 in front of their home crowd in an unexpectedly one-sided National Conference playoff game, writes Mark Truitt. Despite playing away from home, the Packers put on a flawless game to outwit and dissect the bewildered world champions, who had not lost in the divisional play-off since 1988.

Lingfield runners and riders with form guide

Large table containing race details for Lingfield, including race numbers, names, jockeys, and odds.

Table containing various racing results and news snippets, including mentions of 'Blinkered today for the first time: LINGFIELD: 3.30 Bramblehill Buck. SOUTHWELL: 2.15 Burrugh Hill Lass; 3.45 Geolly.'

Vertical text on the left margin: 'ally too o catch', 'and worse', 'skled Win', 'room for Gam', 'hunt a double'.

French win first Euro cup, page 12
Leeds back from the death, page 14

Engel on England's latest slip, page 13
Keating bullish about Hereford, page 15

SportsGuardian

FA CUP THIRD ROUND

Chelsea 1, Newcastle United 1

Ferdinand to rescue in late show

David Lacey

ONLY a messy Russian salad of a goal-kick, combined with Les Ferdinand's acute scoring instincts, kept Newcastle United in the Cup at Stamford Bridge yesterday.

Just when it seemed that Chelsea's defence had preserved the narrow lead created by their counter-attacking skills, Glenn Hoddle's team found themselves hauled back to St James' Park for the third round's 14th replay. So far this season Newcastle have proved omnipotent at home, and Chelsea lost 2-0 there in September.

To complete the Bridge's frustration the draw for the fourth round then offered the winners of this tie a visit to Queens Park Rangers, where Chelsea had won in the Premiership five days earlier.

Newcastle have not won away in the league since beating QPR in mid-October, and yesterday's performance fell some way below the standards of the 1-0 victory at Liverpool in the Coca-Cola Cup which will take them back to London on Wednesday for a quarter-final at Arsenal.

It would be easy to say that sheer persistence by Newcastle spared them a second defeat at Stamford Bridge in four weeks. Certainly they laid steps to the opposing goal in the last quarter-hour, but as the match reached its third minute of stoppage time Chelsea's worst crisis appeared to have passed.

As Kharine prepared to take a goal-kick the mood relaxed in anticipation of the final whistle. All the Chelsea goalkeeper had to do was hoof the ball as far as he could into the Newcastle half.

Kharine, however, was still on edge after being bawled out for needlessly conceding a corner, and neatly delivered a one-iron shot straight to the head of Albert, who was lurking near the halfway line.

The Belgian immediately nodded it through a square and helpless defence, and Ferdinand's 23rd goal of the season, scored with a sure, narrow-angle shot, duly followed.

Maybe Kevin Keegan should take some credit for the fact that Albert was there at all. After Chelsea, tackling tenaciously and outmanoeuvring their opponents in midfield, had dominated the first half, the Newcastle man-

ager replaced Lee, who is carrying an Achilles injury, with Clark and abandoned his plan to play three at the back by pushing Albert forward.

Once the change had been made Newcastle produced some of their better attacking rhythms, and Chelsea were starting to ride their luck towards the end. Nevertheless the denial of victory was hard on Chelsea's central defenders, and especially Duberry, who had repeated the excellence of his pre-Christmas performance against Ferdinand.

For the best part of an hour Chelsea were Newcastle's superiors in almost every aspect of the game. The pattern of the play bore strong echoes of their 1-0 defeat of the league leaders a month earlier.

Wise ran the midfield with strong support from Newton and Spencer, Petrescu brought the ball out steadily on the right, Fielan's speed frequently took him clear of Barton on the left, and Hughes held the ball up with strength and skill.

The goal that gave Chelsea the lead in the 36th minute followed an inspired pass from Wise which released Phelan, who may not be football's most consistent crosser of a ball but this time achieved the perfect height, weight and angle of centre to find Hughes at the far post. Having stolen through the defence, the Welshman scored with an imperious header.

In the penultimate minute of the first half Albert's volley evaded Kharine's fingers only to bounce to safety of the left-hand post. Even after losing the injured Petrescu Chelsea did not seem in need of such luck, and had Srdic not held a sharp volley from Furlong, after Wise and Fielan had again exposed Newcastle on the left, the contest would have been over in the 74th minute.

Portentously perhaps, Kharine had suffered a moment of panic five minutes earlier, when he slipped in the act of clearing Hughes's back-pass and was grateful that Ferdinand could not keep the ball in play. Ferdinand had a goal disallowed for off-side 11 minutes from time, but at the last his predator's instincts did not let Newcastle down.

Chelsea: Kharine, Duberry, D Lee, Myers, Petrescu, Clarke, Stimil, Newton, Wise, Phelan, Spencer, Hughes, Furlong.
Newcastle: Hoddle, Smith, Peacock, Albert, Howey, Barton, L Lee, Clark, P-J, Girdlestone, Elliott, Kitson, Ferdinand, Grinik.
Referee: S Lodge (Barnsley).



Grass-roots level... Howey, Peacock, Elliott, Clark and Kitson pile up the pressure on Ferdinand after his 93rd-minute equaliser. PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENNINGS

FOURTH-ROUND DRAW

Arsenal or Sheffield United v Aston Villa
Bolton Wanderers v Leeds United
Charlton Athletic v Brentford
Coventry City v Leicester City or Manchester City
Everton or Stockport County v Crystal Palace or Port Vale
Fulham or Shrewsbury Town v Liverpool
Hereford United or Tottenham v Birmingham City or Wolves
Huddersfield Town v Peterborough United
Ipswich Town or Blackburn Rovers v Walsall
Middlesbrough v Watford or Wimbledon
Queens Park Rangers v Chelsea or Newcastle United
Reading v Manchester United or Sunderland
Southampton v Crewe Alexandra
Stoke City or Nottingham Forest v Millwall or Oxford United
Swindon Town v Barnsley or Oldham Athletic
West Ham United v Grimsby Town
(to be played January 27/28/29)

Newcastle seek capital gains

Russell Thomas

LES FERDINAND will aim to leave the calling card of another goal at his old Loftus Road premises if Newcastle can exploit the great escape staged by their £2 million man yesterday.

Newcastle seem destined to take the capital route to cup honours after being handed a London trip to QPR in the fourth-round draw yesterday. But first Kevin Keegan's team must overcome Chelsea in

their replay on January 17. Newcastle are back in the capital on Wednesday to face Arsenal in the Coca-Cola Cup quarter-finals, and Keegan said: "We've had so many draws against London clubs that I'm thinking of setting up a base round here."

Loftus Road will stage one of two all-Premiership contests, with Leeds's own recovery at Derby bringing Howard Wilkinson's side a return to Bolton, where they won 2-0 at Christmas.

That number will swell to five if Manchester City (at Coventry), Wimbledon (at Middlesbrough) and Arsenal (home to Aston Villa) win their replays.

The showbiz-style ceremony failed to bring lustre to a draw riddled with uncertainty after 32 third-round ties produced 14 stalemates. There are only five definite ties, one seeing Saturday's headline makers, Charlton and Brentford, meeting at The Valley.

The romance of the Cup will be captured on the favourites Liverpool's visit to Shrewsbury or Fulham, with the Shropshire side likely to confront the goal power of Galloway and company at Gay Meadow. The sold-out notices will go up at Reading's Elm Park, too, if last season's finalists Manchester United overcome Sunderland.

Joe Royle refused to consider the holders Everton's next potential Goodison task, against Crystal Palace or Port Vale, before still-difficult business with Stockport.

Lara 'return' shocks Warks

David Hoppes

WARWICKSHIRE were astounded by suggestions yesterday that Brian Lara is already contemplating a return to English cricket, only three months after abandoning his record three-year contract with the county.

"I have recharged my batteries and I'm feeling really keen and enthusiastic," was the batsman's assurance, as reported in the Mail On Sunday. "It's a really good offer coming from an English county. I'd be delighted to consider it."

Lara's confused state of mind since he walked out of West Indies' tour to England last summer makes his intentions highly unpredictable. One minute he feels slighted and unmoved, and threatens to retire; the next he announces that his batteries are recharged and that he is open to offers. But his pronouncement caused Warwickshire's chief executive Dennis Amis to react with understandable consternation last night.

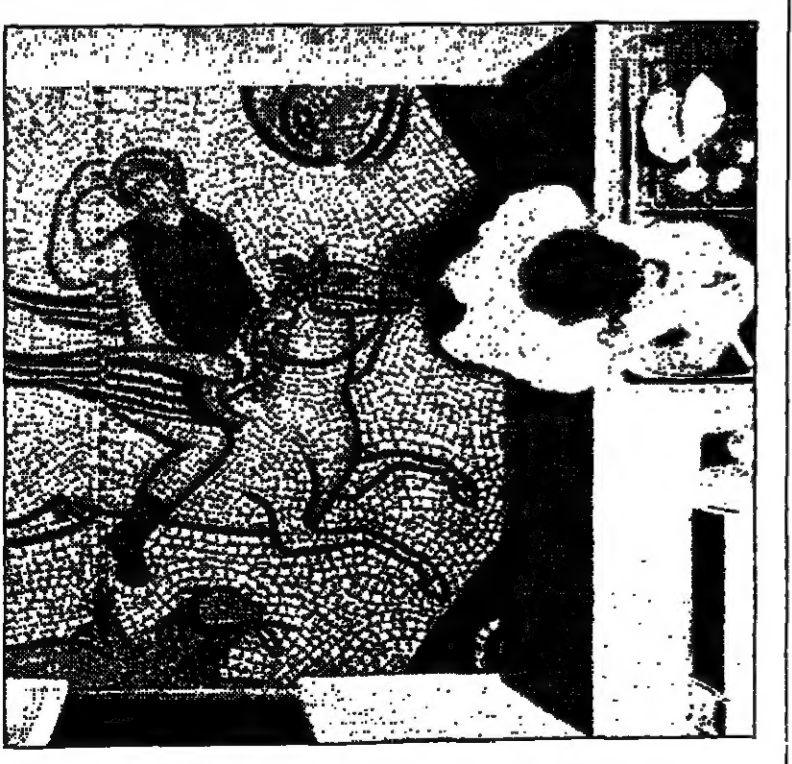
Amis said: "We cancelled his contract and he is a free agent, but the spirit of our agreement was that he would not play for anyone else in 1996. We would be very disappointed if he did play for another county, but I'm sure the committee would have to look at it."

Lara pleaded exhaustion when he scrapped his Warwickshire contract, worth some £100,000 a year. Even yesterday he did not disguise his reservations about the draining demands of the county circuit. "Too much cricket is played in England," he said. "That can kill enthusiasm, so spoiling the quality of play. I'm not prepared to allow myself to get burnt out by overdoing the amount of cricket I play."

Named at the weekend in West Indies' provisional 18-man World Cup party, Lara has yet to confirm his availability. He refused to tour Australia with West Indies in distress — or protest — at his bid for indiscipline in England last summer.

Warwickshire hope to finalise a one-year deal with Shaun Pollock, or his South Africa colleague Brian McMillan, for next season, with Allan Donald intimating that he might be willing to return in 1997.

Surrey and Hampshire have yet to announce their overseas professionals for next season, but Lara, even though he is the finest batsman in the world, represents a considerable gamble.



Sleightholme and Ojomoh get surprise England call

Robert Armstrong

JON SLEIGHTHOLME, who cannot command a regular place in the Bath side, has been called up by England to face France in the opening fixture of rugby union's Five Nations Championship in Paris on Saturday week.

The wing is one of two controversial changes for next week's game. Tim Rodber, regarded by many as a year ago as a future England captain, is dropped as Jack Rowell again turns to his former club Bath and calls up Steve Ojomoh at blind-side flanker.

Sleightholme is the fifth player introduced by Rowell this season and the England manager admits his team are not as strong as the side that entered last year's Five Nations.

"We are in a hiatus but in two or three years' time we will have a 30-man squad of internationally talented players," Rowell said. "You can't expect young men to deliver the goods in the way that [Brian] Moore and [Rob] Andrew were in the latter part of their careers."

Sleightholme, aged 23 and a PE teacher, replaces the Wasps centre Damian Hopley, who played two games on the wing for England before Christmas. As Rowell said, "Sleightholme is very quick", but Hopley will feel aggrieved after his performances against South Africa and Western Samoa. He is not even in the squad of 21.

Ojomoh, who has 10 caps, is no stranger to the French, having shared in England's fourth succes-



Sleightholme... new face

sive victory in Paris two years ago.

Rodber recovered much of his customary dominance in last month's victory over the Samoans but it was not enough for Rowell. "Regrettably Rodber has been off-key for a while. We have done our best but his loss of form has continued through several games going back to the World Cup."

"We have talked to his coach at Northampton, Ian McGeechan, and Tim himself about this. Unfortunately the corner has not been turned. We saw the trend in the World Cup."

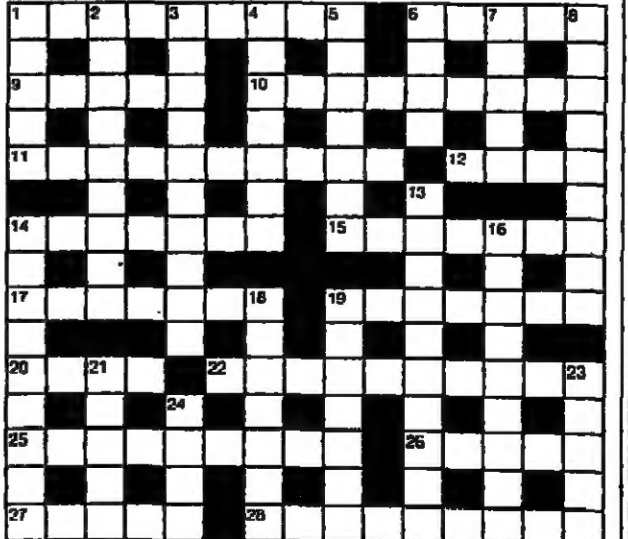
A twisted knee sustained in Northampton's league victory over Nottingham at the weekend may have convinced Rowell that the odds were ripe for a change. Even so, Rodber's absence could limit England's ball-winning capacity at the tail of the line-out. Ojomoh's contribution in that area tends to veer sharply between the inspired and the eccentric.

No one can deny that Rowell's changes underpin an ambitious game plan which seeks to maximise England's pace and driving power, but the gawling suspicion persists that this revamped team will come to grief if they attempt to take on France at their own game.

The full team, page 12

Guardian Crossword No 20,543

Set by Crispa



- Across**
- The perception of speed? (5)
 - The trainee on an old ship can be slow (5)
 - A Belgian centre one passed by (5)
 - Put on before attended to (5)
 - Stars never wobble from side to side (10)
 - People holding a middle position (4)
 - Intimates they could be finders out (7)
 - Figure the heck will appear in time (7)
 - Like a ring for a woman — superior household god (7)
 - A resort area some choose as ideal for retirement (7)
 - Cut a quarter, then left it (4)
 - Adjust rate and things will be different (10)
 - Support for a fisherman's club? (5-4)
 - Soldiers must precede the first lady and that's official (5)
 - Ocean-going vessels moving quickly (5)
- Down**
- Beginning to appear scared (5)
 - Commercial address occasioning high esteem (5)
 - Request one after another in a charming way (10)
 - Certainly not slow to speak (7)
 - Advances a member of the family (7)
 - Having money, always look sly (4)
 - Go on about a key causing a bulge (5)
 - Regulation of the unit dividing military supplies (5)
 - Tip over cross put in unsafe position (10)
 - Workers following a standard being set in Arizona (5)
 - Conjecture about crooked characters till proved innocent (9)
 - A pointer races to hit the pint (5-4)
 - Musical taking rest in a break (7)
- 21** Fire in delight almost (5)
22 Viewed as upwardly mobile — without many shortcomings (5)
24 Basic measures (4)
- Solution tomorrow**

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